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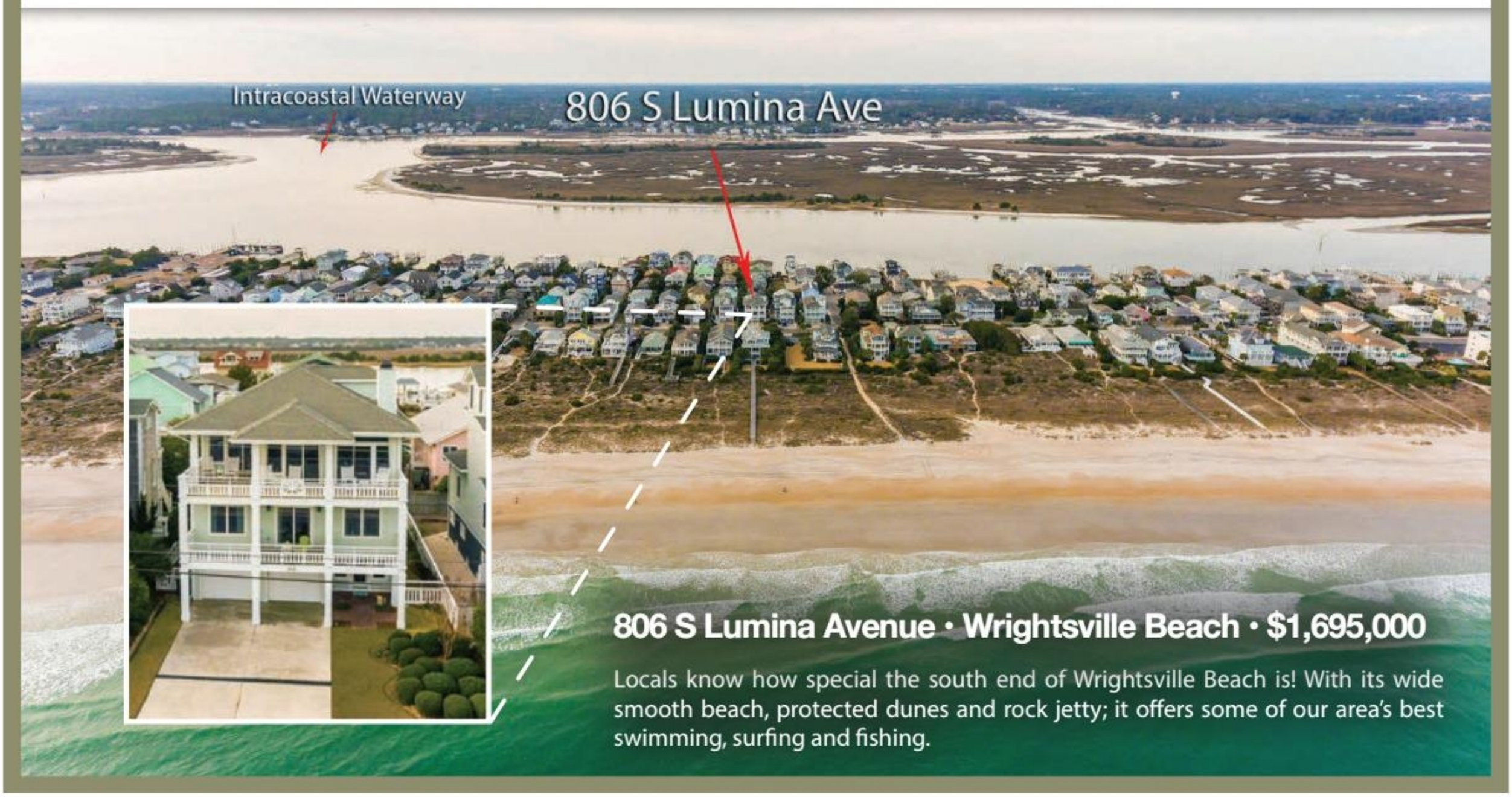

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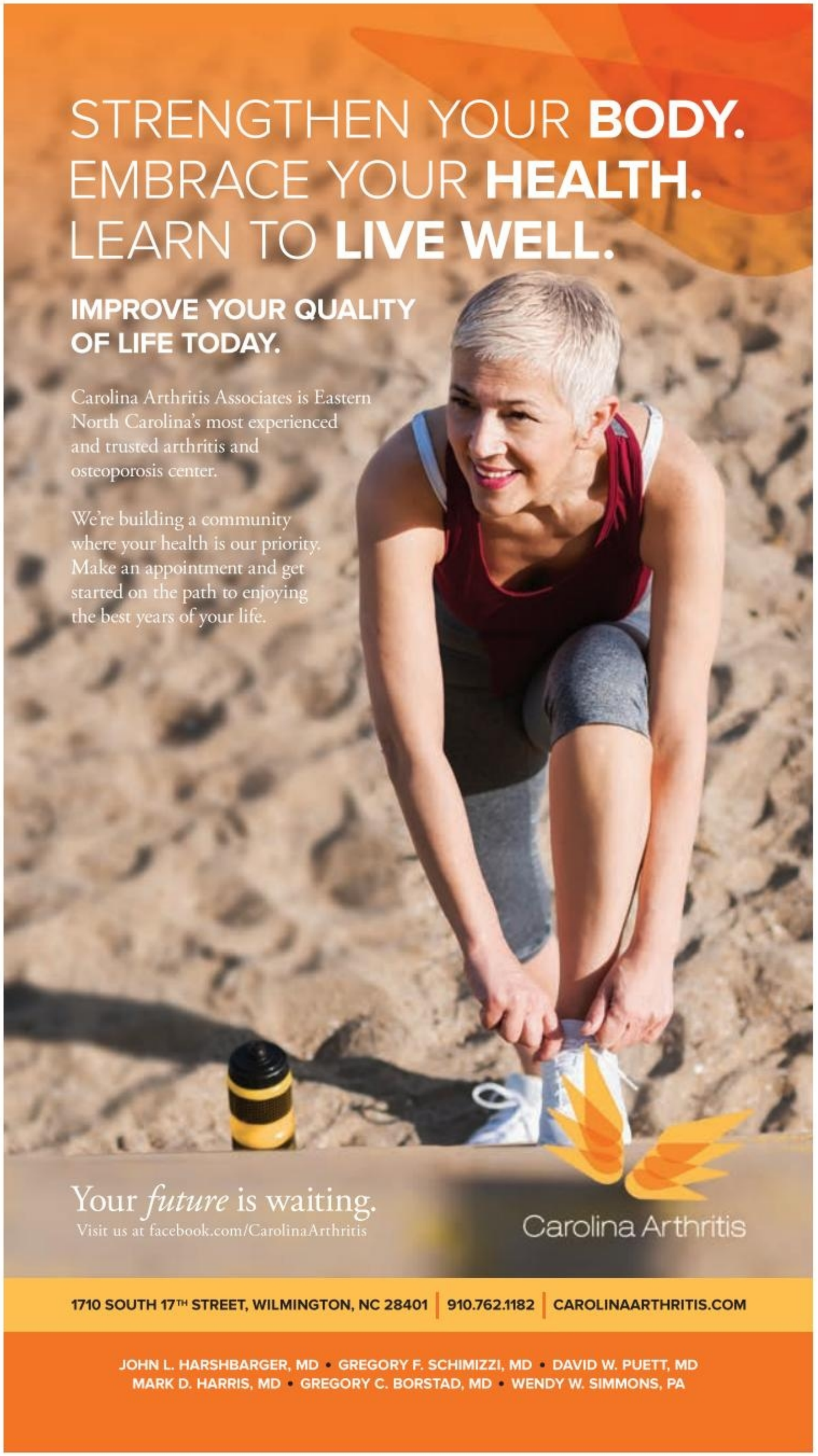
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Sunday Man

'twixt Heaven and Earth

By Jim Dodson

It's Sunday morning in the kitchen, two hours before the sunrise.

A welcome silence fills the house, and at this hour I often hear a still, small voice that may indeed belong to God but is more often than not the mewing of young Boo Radley, eager to be let out in order to roam the neighboring yards.

On the other side of the door sits old Rufus, balancing a universe, home from his nighttime prowlings, the crankiest cat of the known world, complaining to be let in and fed. The noisy one comes in, the quiet one slips out.

I am a butler to cats.

On the plus side, Sunday morning lies like a starry quilt over the neighborhood at this hour. A thin quarter moon hangs on the western horizon like a paper moon in a school play and Venus shines like a jewel in an Ethiop's ear. Somewhere, miles away, a train rumbles by, a reminder of a world that is always going somewhere. But luckily I am here on Earth, a Sunday man beneath a hooked moon, for the moment going nowhere except the end of his driveway to fetch the Sunday paper for reading over the week.

Back inside, I sit for spell with my first coffee, reading one of what I call my Sunday morning books that run the gamut from the sonnets of Shakespeare to the essays of Wendell Berry, from Barbara Brown Taylor to Pierre Teilhard De Chardin — with a dash of Billy Collins and Mary Oliver for proper spiritual seasoning.

This particular Sunday is a gem long out of print, one man's memoir of spiritual rejuvenation first published the year I was born, the story of a successful big-city writer who was forced by reasons of health and age to return to the small Wisconsin town of his birth. There he built a big house on ancestral land but initially struggled to find his place on the ground.

"A man, faced with the peculiar loneliness of where he doesn't want to be," writes Edward Harris Heth in *My Life on Earth*, "is apt to find himself driving along the narrow, twisting country roads, day or night, alone, brooding about the tricks life can play."

Life is lived by degrees. Little by little, the author's lonely drives along country roads yield a remarkable transformation of the angry city man. Heth gets to know — and admire — the eccentric carpenter who builds his house. He drops by a church supper and meets his neighbors, including the quirky Litten sisters "who play a mean game of canasta," know all the village pump gossip "and have an Old Testament talent for disaster." The ancient Litten girls both feed and inspire him to broader exploration.

His neighbor Bud Devere, a young and burly farmer who always shows up uninvited just to chat, insists that Heth see the Willow Road.

"I did not want to see what Bud saw. But the reluctance began fading away in me, that first time we went down the Willow Road. It covers scarcely more than a mile, but in that mile you can cover a thousand miles." Traveling along it, the author sees spring wildflowers, undisturbed forests, a charming farmhouse with narcissus and hyacinth in bloom. He feels his pulse slow, and something akin to simple pleasure takes root.

"Bud kept silent. He wanted me to open my own eyes. . . . Since then, I've learned how many country people know and enjoy this art of the small scene and event, the birth of a calf, a remembered spot, the tumultuous labor and excitement of feeding the threshers, who come like locusts and swarm for a day over your farm and disappear again at night, the annual Welsh singing competition in the village — these are the great and proper events of a lifetime."

Funny thing is, I have no idea how this little book, something of a surprise bestseller when it first appeared in 1953, got into my bookshelf, and now into my soul. It just magically appeared, a gift from the gods or perhaps a wise friend who knew I might discover it

Now the sun is up and so are the dogs. I am a butler to them, too. Despite a late frost, birds are singing and there is a new angle to the light — not to mention the first green tufts of daffodils rising like green fingers from the Earth.

Anticipating their Sunday walk, of course, the dogs think every day is the first day of spring. Mulligan, a black, flat-haired retriever I found as a pup a decade ago running wild along a busy highway, trots ahead off the lead, our tiny pack's alpha girl, while Ajax — whom I call Junior — a golden retriever far too good-looking for his own good — lumbers along toting his own lead, deeply impressed with himself.

The neighborhood is old, with massive hardwoods arching like cathedral beams overhead. A man in his bathrobe steps out and shuffles hurriedly to the end of his sidewalk to fetch his Sunday morning paper. He gives a quick wave, bobbing a neighborly head, and hurries back inside to read.

The news of the world can wait. Because it never really changes, a story as old as cabbages and kings. Besides, we are briefly off the clock of the world all of Sunday, footloose upon the Earth, officially out of range, in search of an earthier divinity. Truthfully, I'm a bit sad to see winter's cold and prospects of snow give way to the advance of daffodils. I am a winter's boy, after all, but happy for a wife who is an endless summer girl dreaming of white lilacs in bloom.

"What is divinity," asked Wallace Stevens in his lovely poem *Sunday Morning*

"if it can come
Only in silent shadows and in dreams?
Shall she not find in comforts of the sun,
In pungent fruit and bright, green wings, or else
In any balm or beauty of the earth,
Things to be cherished like the thought of heaven?
Divinity must live within herself:
Passions of rain, or moods in falling snow;

ILLUSTRATION BY ROMEY PETITE

Grievings in loneliness, or unsubdued
Elations when the forest blooms; gusty
Emotions on wet roads on autumn nights;
All pleasures and all pains, remembering
The bough of summer and the winter branch,
These are the measures destined for her soul."

By the time we reach the park, Lady Summer Bough and Lord Winter Branch, the strengthening sun has melted away the year's final frost. Across the way stands an ancient oak I peddled by a half a million times as a kid on his way to the ball field; it looks like a lighted candelabra, limned with golden morning sun.

Funny how I only recently noticed this.

It is middle Sunday morning at church, our usual pew back right. The young preacher is named Greg. Not long ago we attended his ordination as a priest. My cheeky wife thinks Greg is almost too good-looking to be a priest. Lots of women in the parish seem to share this view.

The gist of his Sunday sermon is the need to look with fresh eyes upon Matthew's Beatitudes. But the true strength of his Sunday morning message lies in the suggestion that we all should aspire to become our true selves and Christian mystics: "Don't be scared by that word mystic. It simply means someone who has gone from an intellectual belief system to actual inner experience." The journey from head to the heart, Greg says, means we are called to be mystics — to chuck rules-based, belief-system Christianity in favor of something far more intimate and organic as the Earth around us.

To coax the point home, he mentions Franciscan friar Richard Rohr's observation that religion is largely filled with people who are afraid of Hell, and spirituality is for people who have gone through hell.

And with spring on the Sunday doorstep, Father Greg provides the perfect metaphor directly from renewing nature — the mystery of how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, how becoming our true selves is not unlike the chrysalis that must crack open in order for the butterfly's wings to gain strength and allow it to fly.

"And as we struggle," notes the bright new associate rector, "it breeds compassion within our hearts. Just as the butterfly pressed fluid into its wings, our struggle enables compassion to flow through our bodies, a compassion that allows us to empathize with the suffering of others."

I'll admit I am a Sunday man who digs a good sermon. And this was a mighty thoughtful one. Young Greg is off to an excellent start, even if — like Junior — he is a tad too good-looking.

Speaking of digging, after a Chicago-style hotdog, I'm home for full Sunday afternoon working in my new garden, digging in the soil and delving in the soul.

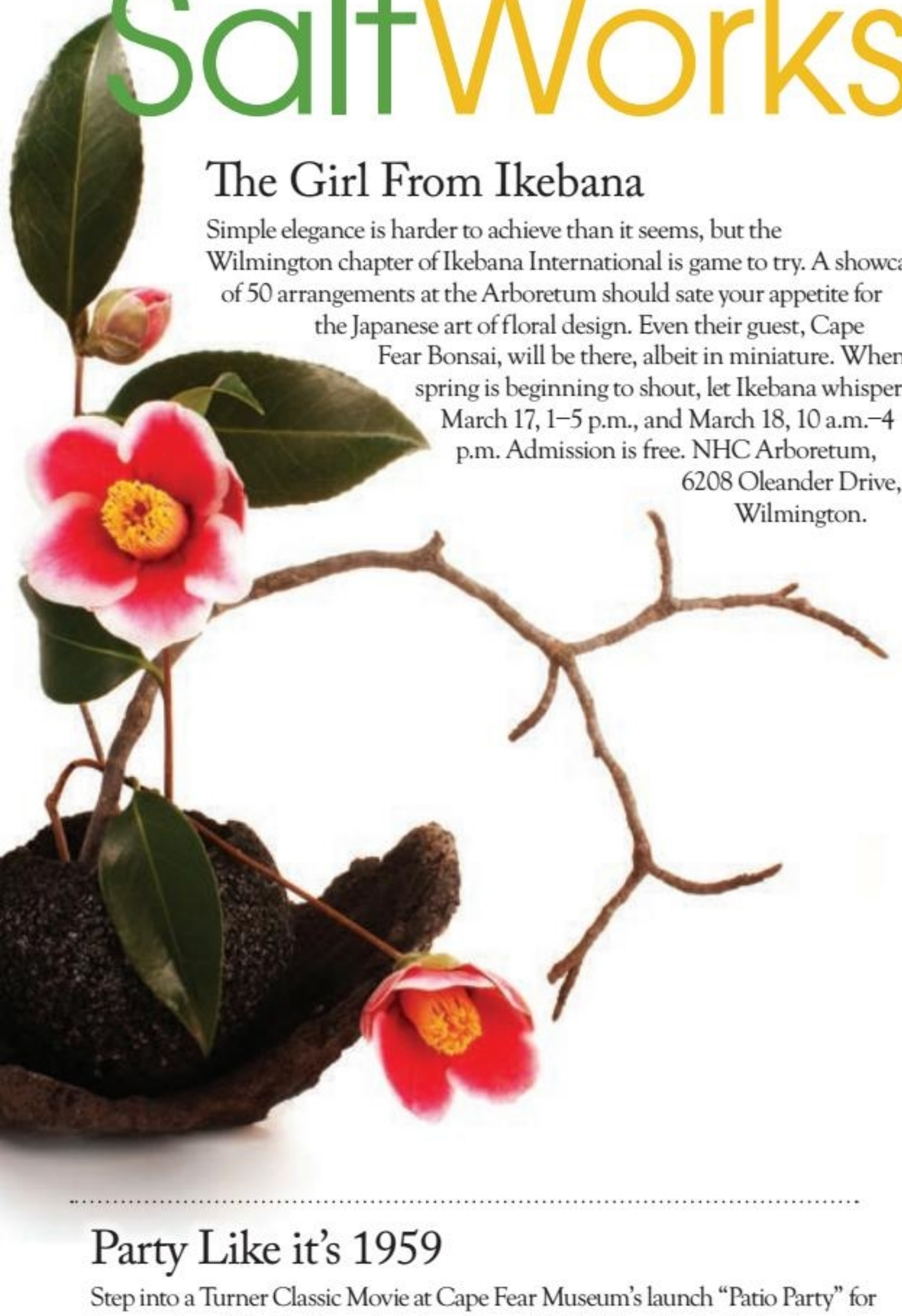
Having pulled down an old pergola and cleaned out a handsome brick planter long overgrown with ivy, I lose complete track of time in the backyard planting Blue Angel hostas and a pair of broadleaf hydrangeas, repairing and raising a much-loved birdfeeder, hanging chimes high in a red oak and transplanting ostrich ferns. If one is closer to God's heart in a garden, then perhaps I am a backyard mystic with dirty hands.

By Sunday sundown, my knees are aching but the healing is real. Renewed for a week of cabbages and kings, we settle down with the Sunday paper and a bit of Netflix before bed, though I tend to doze off halfway through the program.

Old Rufus goes out; Boo Radley comes in. The dogs follow us to bed. For some reason I seem to sleep so well on Sunday nights.

Contact Editor Jim Dodson at jim@thepilot.com

SaltWorks



The Girl From Ikebana

Simple elegance is harder to achieve than it seems, but the Wilmington chapter of Ikebana International is game to try. A showcase of 50 arrangements at the Arboretum should sate your appetite for the Japanese art of floral design. Even their guest, Cape Fear Bonsai, will be there, albeit in miniature. When spring is beginning to shout, let Ikebana whisper. March 17, 1–5 p.m., and March 18, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Admission is free. NHC Arboretum, 6208 Oleander Drive, Wilmington.

Party Like it's 1959

Step into a Turner Classic Movie at Cape Fear Museum's launch "Patio Party" for the opening of the Smithsonian's traveling exhibit "Patios, Pools, & the Invention of the American Backyard." Some of us might still be rotating kabobs on the grill, vacuuming in high heels and extolling the virtues of conditioned air, but others may need a refresher on the era that invented suburbia as we know it. Held outdoors in the museum park with retro cocktails and Thrill of the Grill cuisine, it should be a swingin' party and a swell exhibit! Should your closet not accommodate this mid-century mission, tiptoe over to The Wonder Shop (22 N. Front St.), Jess James' Style Girl Vintage (511 Castle St.) or Second Skin Vintage (615 Castle St.). March 23, 5–8 p.m., Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market St. Tickets: $15 members, $30 non-members. www.capefearmuseum.org

Crazy on Her

Ann Wilson of Heart, aka Rock and Roll Hall of Famer with two of the most memorable songs of 1976 (and conveyor belt of hard rock hits after that), comes to the Wilson Center. She promises "songs from my years of solo work and the unforgettable songs of Heart" plus work from her new album, "Beautiful Broken," but honestly, we'd go hear Ann Wilson sing the phone book. March 21 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets: $37.80–83 Call 910-362-7999 or visit www.capefearstage.com

Let There Be Bagpipes!

Grab your green and prepare to thrust your fists in the air, rejoicing. Wilmington's St. Patrick's Day Parade may not be the biggest downtown sees, but what it lacks in size it makes up for in spirit. Live music, dancing, food vendors and green beer abound. Rain or shine, North Front and Water streets will be filled with Irish pride with the parade starting at 11 a.m. on March 11. The family-friendly festival lasts until 6 p.m. wilmingtonstpatricksdayfestival.com

Running with Narrative

Ever wanted to run (or walk) a 5k? Or do you feel revved up about social justice issues with no outlet? Get ready for the 2nd Annual Free Movement & Black Man Running 5k for social justice. Held among the pines of Hugh MacRae Park, this 5k (3.1 miles) run and festival aims to build community and improve the health and social crises facing African-American men, but everyone – regardless of skill level – is invited to participate. Black Man Running is a project of Working Narratives, a Wilmington-based media arts and social justice organization. Their free weekly running group meets Mondays at 6:30 p.m. at Jengo's Playhouse, 815 Princess Street. 5k Registration fees are $20 per individual, $12 per team. March 11, 8 a.m.– 4 p.m. Hugh MacRae Park, 314 Pine Grove Drive, Wilmington. Register at www.blackmanrunning.org

More Chicken Fried Cow Bell

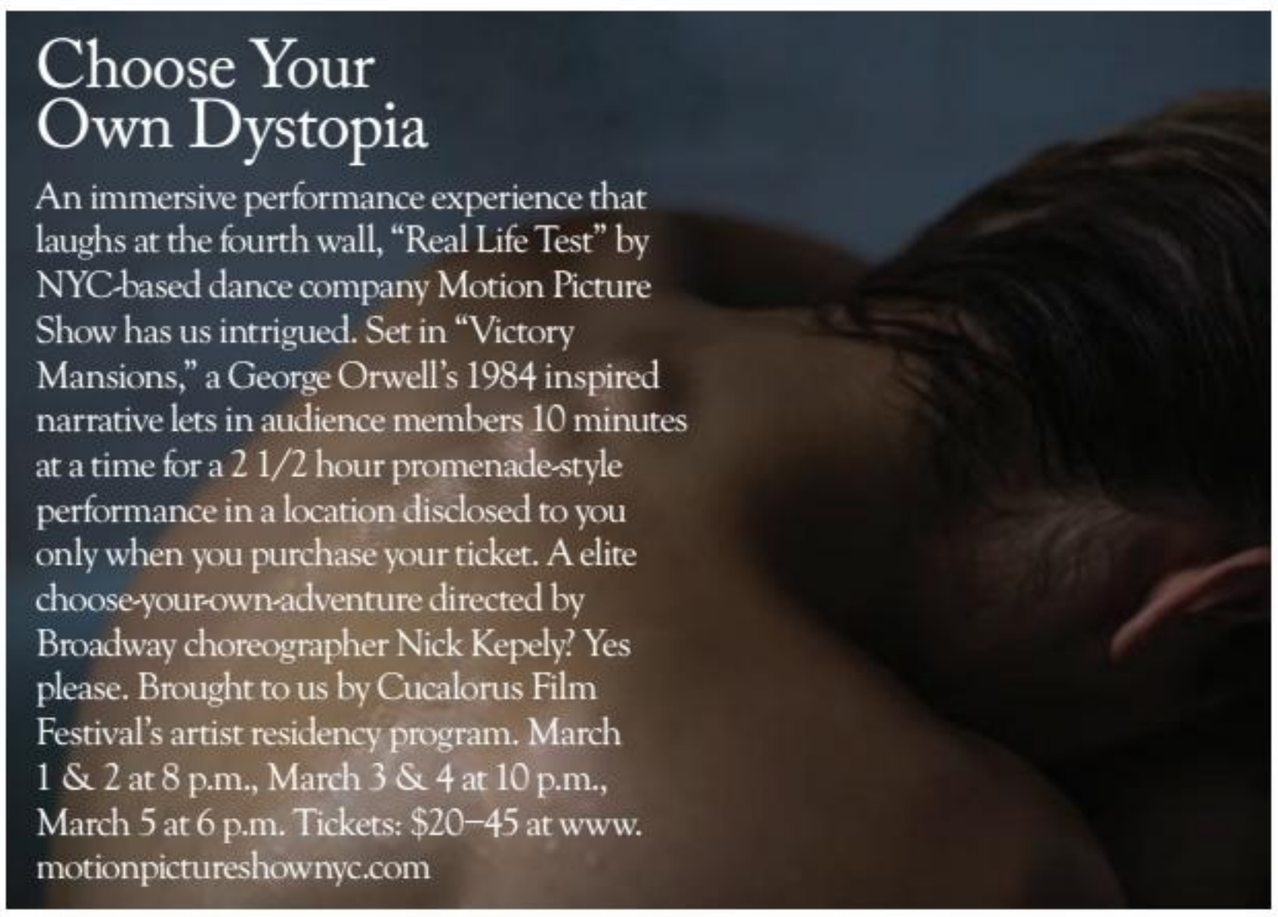
Southern Culture On The Skids is that soundtrack music — that Tarantino soundtrack music — but this North Carolina-made band puts on a show in their own right. Shout out all the words to the "Camel Walk" and perform fevered dances to "Meximelt" or just drop into the trance of their special mix of rockabilly, greasy surf and blues rock 'n' roll. In 2014, the Southern Folklife Collection at UNC-Chapel Hill even mounted an exhibition about their impact on Southern music and culture (as if we had any doubt). Opening act: The Phantom Playboys. Thursday, March 9, 7–11 p.m. Tickets: $15 advance, $18 at the door. Reggie's 42 Street Tavern, 1415 42nd St., Wilmington.

Made in the Old North State

We know N.C. has no shortage of artisans, tinker men (and women), and potters who can throw more than gravy on the wheel. You may know we are the Tar Heel State, but what about the Turpentine State? The Rip Van Winkle State? The woodworkers and whittlers know. They are made of tough stuff and they make tough stuff. Shop this "Made in N.C." festival for pottery, jewelry and handcrafted items for your home from 50+ vendors. Also, food trucks and cash bar. March 18 & 19, 12 – 6 p.m. Admission: $5, kids under 12 are free. Brooklyn Arts Center, 514 North 4th Street, Wilmington. www.brooklynartsnc.com

Visions of Mermaids

Swimming in our heads (and in pirate lore) are mermaids of the Cape Fear. Who's to say, on a dreary night, bordering on scurvy, Blackbeard or Stede Bonnet didn't catch a glimpse of these illusive Amazons of the sea? There's a reason for the feminine pronoun "La" when speaking of "La mer" and that ships are always referred to as "she" — the sea is indelibly romantic. Visiting for two weekends, we have the world famous Weeki Wachee Mermaids (of Florida) to perform in the 235,000-gallon Cape Fear Shoals habitat tank at the NC Aquarium. A slew of opportunities to see them swim with sharks, rays and schools of fish, or to meet the mermaids on dry land, will be available with regular admission and additional programming. Doughnut breakfast with mermaids, paint night and other opportunities are by reservation. March 3–5, March 10–12, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. daily, Tickets: $8.95–10.95, NC Aquarium, 900 Loggerhead Road, Kure Beach. www.ncaquariums.com/fort-fisher



Choose Your Own Dystopia

An immersive performance experience that laughs at the fourth wall, "Real Life Test" by NYC-based dance company Motion Picture Show has us intrigued. Set in "Victory Mansions," a George Orwell's 1984 inspired narrative lets in audience members 10 minutes at a time for a 2 1/2 hour promenade-style performance in a location disclosed to you only when you purchase your ticket. A elite choose-your-own-adventure directed by Broadway choreographer Nick Kepely? Yes please. Brought to us by Cucalorus Film Festival's artist residency program. March 1 & 2 at 8 p.m., March 3 & 4 at 10 p.m., March 5 at 6 p.m. Tickets: $20–45 at www.motionpictureshownyc.com

Brew-Haha

Wilmington likes to drink. There's no doubt about that. A local beach store even sells tank tops that say "I'm not drunk, I'm just from Wilmington," which is booze-logic if we've ever heard it, but it does make the point that we like to get in our cups. But, a new 10-day festival highlights our burgeoning fancy craft beer crowd, there for taste and not so much sheer quantity, though there is that, too. Pairings with cuisine, a brewing competition, the events are getting creative. The newly forged Cape Fear Craft Beer Alliance put aside differences from the ancient beer wars of years past and invites the groups together to just have a drink. Cape Fear Craft Beer Week: March 24 – April 1, times, locations and event prices vary. Details at www.capefearcraftbeerweek.com

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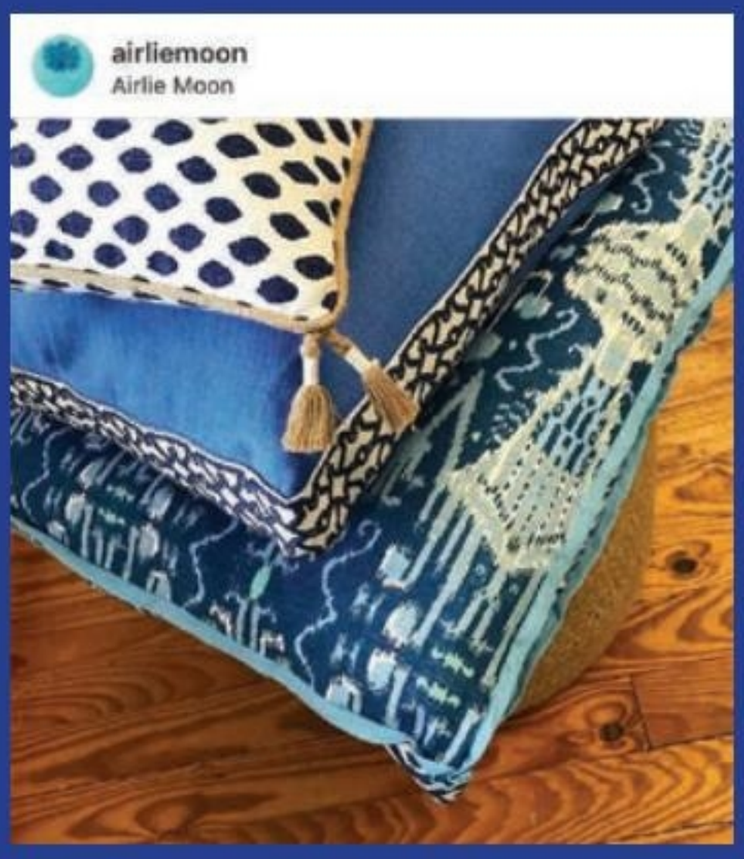

OUR APRIL INSTAGRAM CONTEST THEME:

"Spring Color"

Bold pigments and vibrant hues. Capture the spectrum of the coast in spring.

Tag your photos on Instagram using #saltmaginstacontest (submissions needed by March 10)

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Presented by Elaine Hensen, Historian
Tuesday, March 7th, 2017 at 3 p.m.

Join us for a presentation of vintage post cards showing the seven types of post cards from the mid 1880s to the present through historic Wilmington, Carolina Beach and Wrightsville Beach cards. Elaine is a noted historian who is known and loved for her great illustrated presentations. **RSVP by Monday, March 6th.**

"Art For A Positive Well-being" Art Series
Presented by Maureen McKenna, Artist & Instructor
Thursday, March 16th, 2017 at 2 p.m.

Join us for the second in this series of three instructional painting classes for anyone who wants to explore their hidden artistic talent! These series are structured for the novice to follow along, and are interesting for the intermediate skilled painter. The series is a great opportunity to discover the three mediums of painting; watercolor, acrylic and oil in one course series! Our March session will offer the opportunity to paint a Sunset of blended colors on canvas in Oil. **RSVP by Friday, March 10th. Cost: $10.**

"Big Bloomin Orchid Day": The Cape Fear Orchid Society's 2017 Grower's Day
Presented by The Cape Fear Orchid Society
Saturday, March 25th, 2017, 8:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m.

Please join us for a morning of orchid culture and the opportunity to purchase new lovely blooming orchids. We will provide information on the easy basic care of your new orchid and answer your questions. Register early as space is limited. **RSVP by Monday, March 20th. Cost: $10.**

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Can't Fade

Wilmington's industrial might is slowly washing out, but its legacy lives on at the Block Shirt Factory

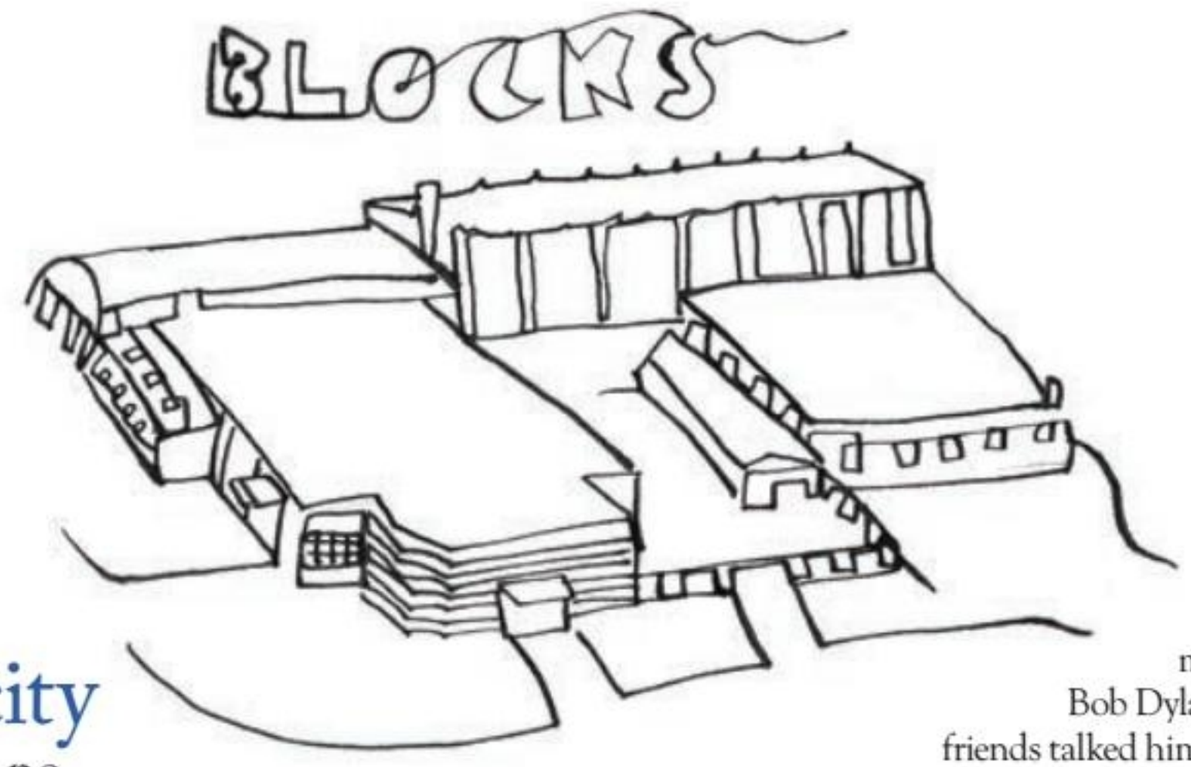

ILLUSTRATION BY ISABEL ZERMANI

By Isabel Zermani

Watching my city

change isn't easy. Mainly, I no longer can give accurate directions. As people flood in, I can't say "past the old . . ." or "next to the new . . ." without eliciting that dazed look. Newcomers will never know the shade of the "Sonic Oak" or when Mayfaire looked more like Mayberry.

Not a total Luddite, I, too, celebrate progress — God knows, we need it after a recession that endured long beyond when we were told it was over — but it requires a leap of faith. It means taking a risk and enduring the awful hallway between the door that shuts and the door that opens. What that looks like in Wilmington is construction.

We are a boomtown again.

But some of the detonators of this growth spurt are doing something really smart: a combination of historic preservation and arts patronage that keeps the embers of legacy warm.

One of those is Mark Maynard Jr. of Tribute Companies Inc. South Front, the former housing project barracks turned hipster paradise, is the brainchild of these developers who are underway with Phase II, the Block Shirt Factory.

Maynard approached local metal artist Michael Van Hout to create a 30-foot triptych mural for the development's entryway to honor the building's history. Maynard dug up some photographs from the archives and then "totally left it up to me," says Van Hout.

The mural centerpiece is a 1960s factory scene of women working, a time-stamp of when women joined the workforce in droves. You can almost hear The Shirelles playing except that the humming of the machines would've drowned out any music. Van Hout traces the round faces and bouffants of these women with wire, then draws the receding perspective of the long busy factory room, cross-cut by looping air hoses hanging from the ceiling.

Van Hout's keen ability to convey meaning with simple contour lines, to capture pure expression with a bent wire is uncanny. He would say "elemental."

He comes by it honestly. Not looking for art, he found it in bailing wire while working as a groundskeeper, spreading pine straw, at NC State after having dropped out of his forestry major. It was the '70s and he conjured Bob Dylan faces from disposable wire until some friends talked him into studying sculpture at UNCG.

Van Hout still uses industrial materials in his work. The wire comes wound up in oil and he has to stretch and strip it in the yard outside his studio at Acme.

Something about the material, the medium of wire, is so fitting for an homage to Block Shirts, or their other moniker "Southland Manufacturing Corp."

When Nathan Block, son of William Block, came down to Wilmington to expand their underwear manufacturing business in 1923, he brought 25 sewing machines and maintained them himself. I wonder if his hands were oiled and pinched like Van Hout's who tapes his fingertips like a pre-game ritual before working with the sharp wire.

No stranger to hard work, William Block was only 13 years old in 1890 when he immigrated to Baltimore from Riga, Latvia, where his mother operated a shirt-making business. William excelled in manufacturing, married, had four children and eventually shifted his operations to Wilmington, home to two cotton mills. He bought a house near the temple. His business switched from underwear to shirts, which turned out to be a fortuitous move. By 1937, they were the largest manufacturer of shirts in the South producing 24,000 per week and employing 350 people.

The first panel of Van Hout's triptych shows the exterior of the Block Shirt factory as it was then, large brick buildings between 3rd and Front Streets on Greenfield Street where the corporation operated until 1992. Block Shirts would reach far beyond downtown Wilmington, opening factories in the "Far East" in the global 1980s, grossing over $100 million a year, and stocking shirts in 10,000 retailers.

"The block-long home of the famous Block shirts" reads an old advertisement for the Can't Fade shirts that Van Hout used as source material. The final panel shows a store window, each proud shirt at a jaunty angle.

Once centers of industry, these brick shells will soon house hip apartments with high ceilings and a modern industrial aesthetic. American industry may be fading, but, as we build, the legacy of what came before shouldn't.

Recommended reading: *Tales of a Shirtmaker: A Jewish Upbringing in North Carolina* by Susan Taylor Block.

Isabel Zermani, our senior editor, prefers the storied life.

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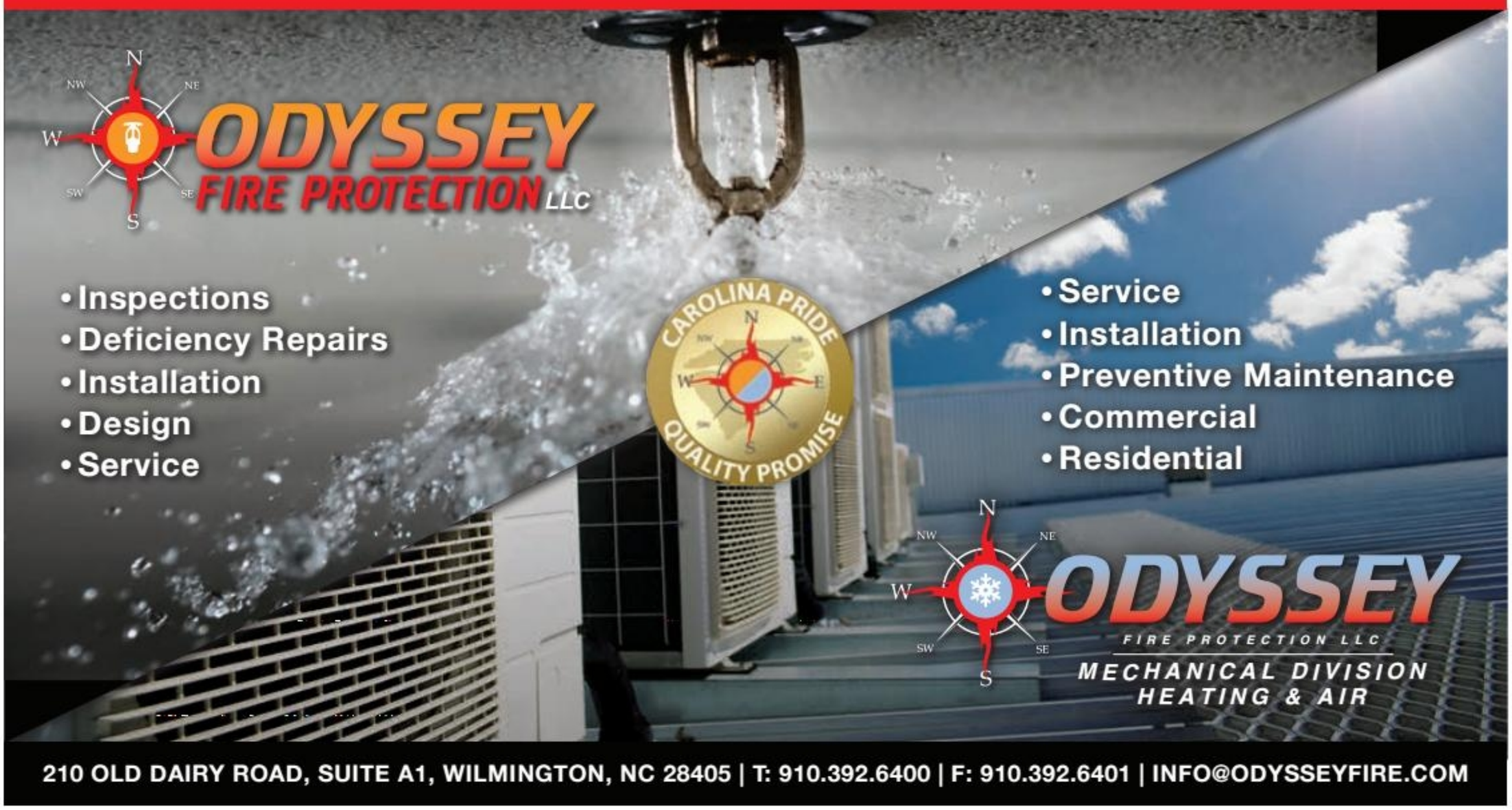

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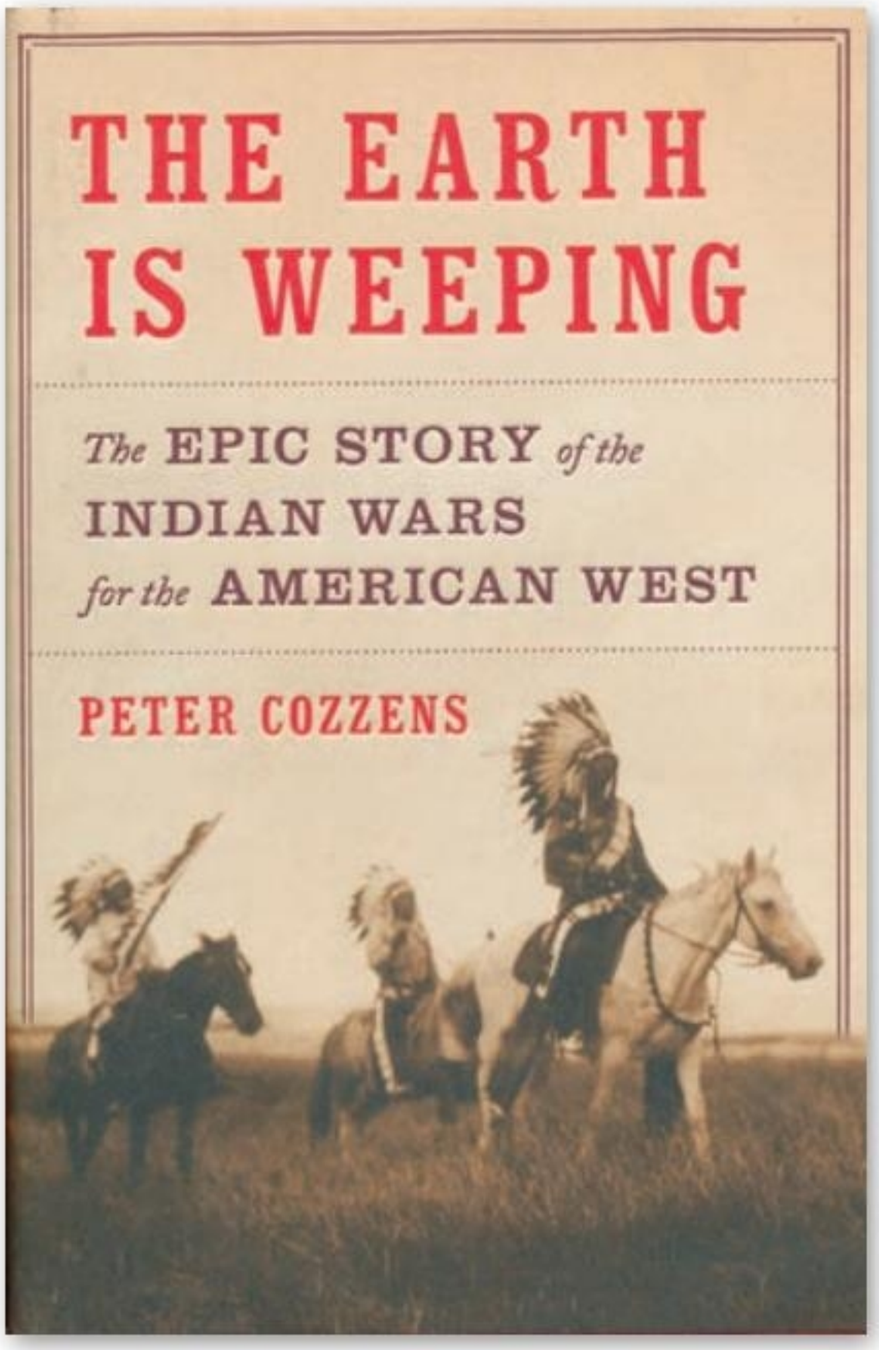
Trail of Tears

The sorrowful history of Western expansion



By Stephen E. Smith

During the early-to mid-19th century, an unknown Native American warrior documented his life in pictographs on a buffalo hide. His early years were happy. He owned horses, took two wives, fathered children. Then white-faced figures appear pointing sticks that spit fire. Later, he painted his family dying of smallpox. His last pictograph illustrates the arrival of Jesuits in their black cassocks. There the narrative ends, suggesting, perhaps, that Jesuits are deadlier than smallpox.

Whatever the cause of the warrior's demise, there's no denying that the 19th-century collision between Native Americans and westward migrating peoples of European descent was one of the most shameful and tragic chapters in the history of the continent. Peter Cozzens' meticulously written and thoroughly documented *The Earth Is Weeping: The Epic Story of the Indian Wars for the American West* is the latest offering in a spate of recent books that graphically detail how shameful and tragic the winning of the West truly was. (*An American Genocide* by Benjamin Madley and Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, both published in the last year, are also well worth reading.)

Most of these recent Indian histories owe their perspective, at least in part, to Dee Brown's 1970 *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, a best-seller that transformed the attitude with which Americans regard indigenous people. Published three years after the founding of the American Indian Movement, Brown portrays the government's dealings with Native Americans as an ongoing effort to eradicate their culture and religion. Cozzens adopts a slightly more balanced and analytical view of the Indian wars, taking into account the misjudgments and barbarism prevalent on both sides of the conflict.

From the opening chapter, it's obvious the story Cozzens has chosen to tell is ghastly beyond the power of words. Government policy dictated that indigenous people be concentrated on reservations of ever decreasing size until their will to fight was broken and their cultural cohesion destroyed. The wholesale slaughter of the buffalo was intended to deny food and livelihood to the tribes, and with the arrival of the railroads, the hunting grounds native people had occupied for millennia were opened to white settlement. What resulted was a fight to the death in which the tribes had no chance of prevailing. For white politicians, soldiers and settlers, the primary motivations were greed and racism. Native Americans stood in the way of wealth and progress, and they were perceived as a subhuman species to be dealt with as quickly and as expediently as possible. Even generally peaceable tribes such as the Modoc and Nez Perce were treated ruthlessly.

"The whites were coming now, in numbers incomprehensible to Indians," Cozzens writes. "They assaulted the Indian lands from every direction. Settlers rolled in from the east, while miners poked at the periphery of the Indian country from the west, north and south and simply overran it when new mineral strikes were made. In Westerners' parlance, Indians who resisted the onslaught were to be 'rounded up' and rendered harmless on reservation land too miserable to interest the whites." But Cozzens also notes that whites were not solely to blame for the dissolute loss of life and property. ". . . tribes had long battled one another over hunting grounds or horses. Indeed, fighting was a cultural imperative, and men owed their place in society to their prowess as warriors."

The subjugation of Western indigenous people took place during the 30 years from 1861 to 1891, as the U.S. Army, acting under orders from Eastern politicians, pursued the policy of "mollification and eradication." Beginning with the Dakota uprising in Minnesota and ending with the tragedy at Wounded Knee and the 1891 surrender of the Oglala Lakotas at Pine Ridge

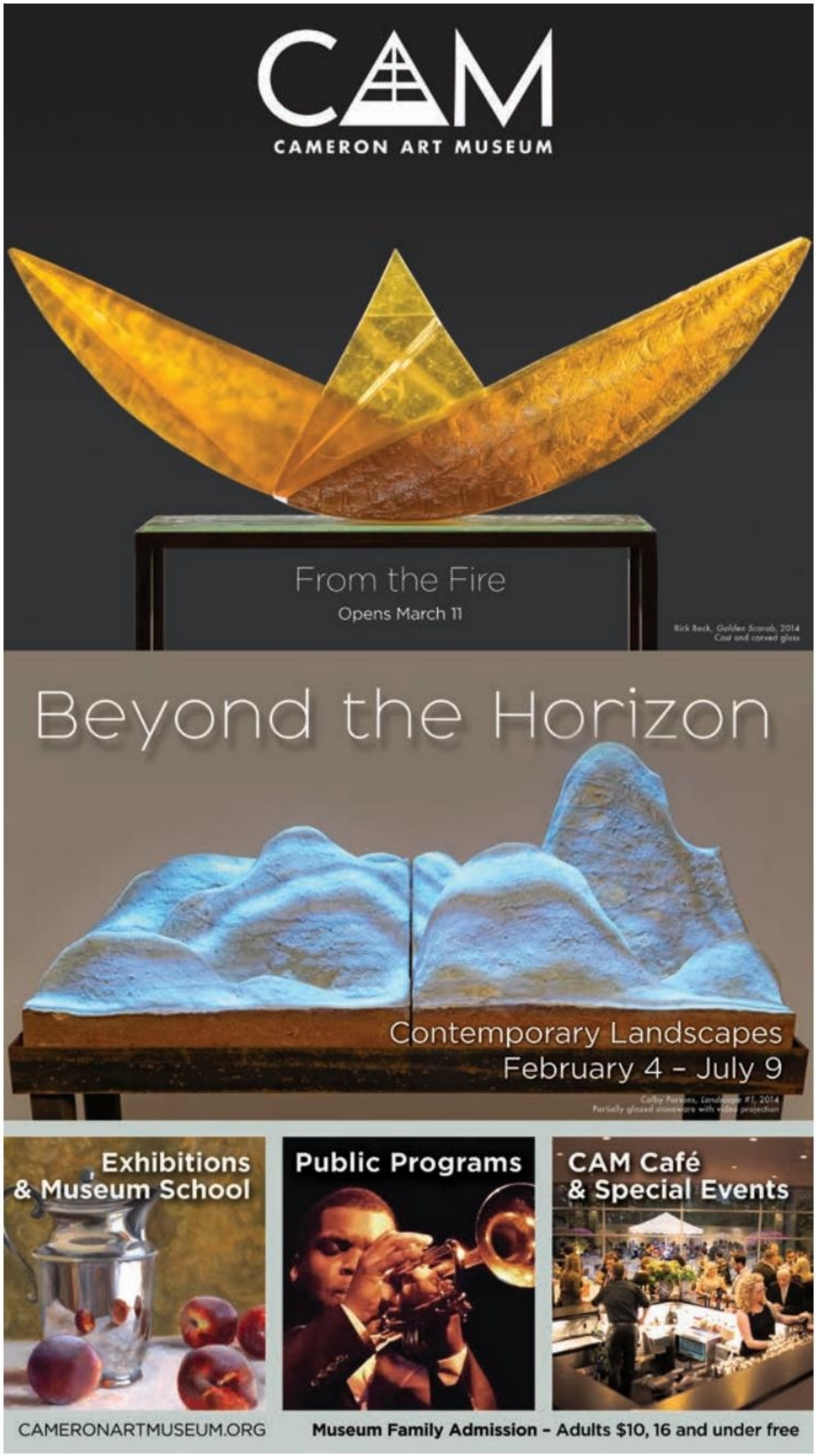
Agency in South Dakota, the story is one of unremitting atrocity, suffering and death.

Former Civil War generals found themselves incapable of adapting to erratic and uncoordinated tribal uprisings. No less a national figure than William Tecumseh Sherman was inept at managing Indian affairs, and Winfield Scott Hancock, the hero of Gettysburg, found himself unable to negotiate with the Cheyenne and burned their villages in central Kansas. Phil Sheridan, who had swept the Shenandoah Valley clear of Confederate troops, found himself incapable of placating the tribes and conducted the Red River War, the Ute War, and the Great Sioux War of 1876-77, which resulted in the death of Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer and a sizable portion of his command. (For all his faithful service during the Civil War, Sheridan is best remembered for having said: "The only good Indian is a dead Indian.") President Ulysses S. Grant, whom biographers portray as a friend to Indian people, convened a secret White House meeting to plan strategy for provoking a war with the Lakotas. In the late 19th century, the government, in an effort to eliminate further uprisings, outlawed Native American religious ceremonies, and altruistic white civilians established boarding schools where Indian children were required to speak English, study math and religion, and where they were punished for use of their native language and the exercise of their tribal beliefs.

Insofar as it's possible to condense a 30-year period of national misadventure into 460 pages of carefully crafted text, Cozzens has produced an exemplary history that's commendably objective, a reference book for the Indian wars. Beyond the intrinsic value of acquiring historical knowledge for its own sake, thoughtful readers may well gain a perspective on contemporary Native American issues — public health, education, gambling, discrimination and racism, the use of sports mascots, and the desecration of tribal lands. More than 100 years after the surrender of the last Indian tribe, suicide, alcoholism and crime remain serious problems on reservations.

Positive edifications notwithstanding, *The Land Is Weeping*, for all its detachment, allows for only one conclusion: The 19th-century sweep of "civilization" across the territories west of the Mississippi created for the Native American tribes who inhabited the region the cultural wasteland we now call peace.

Stephen E. Smith is a retired professor and the author of seven books of poetry and prose. He's the recipient of the Poetry Northwest Young Poet's Prize, the Zoe Kincaid Brockman Prize for poetry and four North Carolina Press awards.



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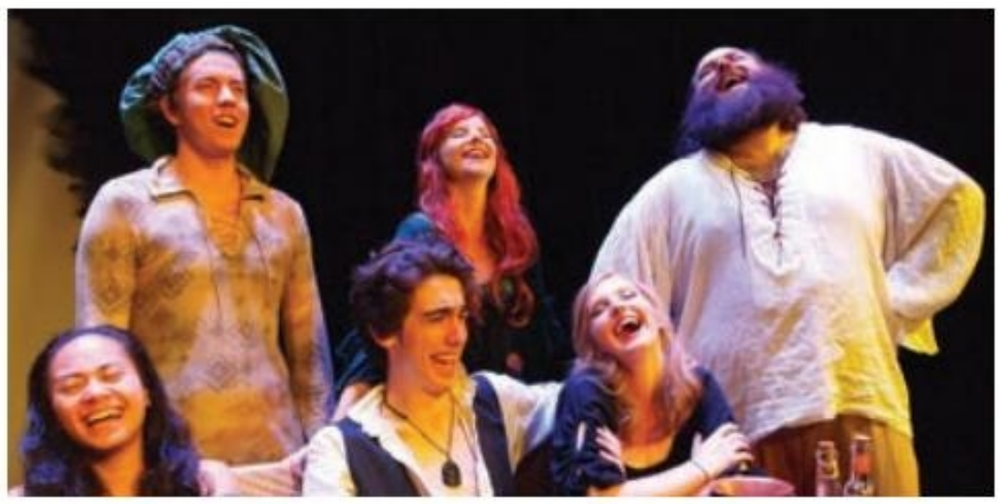

By Nicholas Gray

Thalian Association (est. 1788)

Established in 1788, Thalian Association is the official community theater of North Carolina, annually producing more shows than any other, mostly old favorites and children's theater (TACT), but recently some small-cast plays at the Red Barn. Often confused with our mainstay venue Thalian Hall, many locals don't know the two entities are not one in the same. What's up next? *Barefoot in the Park* (March) and *The Lyons* (June) at Red Barn, 1122 S. 3rd St., *Gypsy* (March 30-April 9), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (May 18-28), *Young Frankenstein* (Oct.), and *A Christmas Story, The Musical* (Dec.) at Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St. *Mr. Roberts* (July 4-23) on the *USS Battleship N.C.* www.thalian.org

UNCW Department of Theatre (est. 1959)

If you're not part of the university, you may not know them, but you should want to. UNCW consistently offers more sheer production value than any other. Costumes, set, lights — they've got it all! And though guided by mentors, we have the students to thank for it. What's up next? *The Children's Hour* (March 30-April 9), Cultural Arts Building, UNCW, 601 South College Road. www.uncw.edu/theatre

Willis Richardson Players (est. 1974)

Named for the historic Harlem Renaissance playwright from Wilmington, the African-American theater company (led for many years by Lela Thompson) has brought us shows about black experience (*Ain't Misbehavin*, *A Raisin in the Sun*). Look for upcoming productions at wrpwilm.wordpress.com

Opera House Theatre Company (est. 1985)

Known for its big names: the late Lou Criscuolo, who faithfully served our city for decades as artistic director (now helmed by Alice Sherwood), and Ray Kennedy, the die-hard director, OHTC brings us spectacle after spectacle. What's up next? *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (March 1-12), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (June 7-25), *Camelot* (July 5-23), *South Pacific* (Aug. 2-20), *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Aug. 30-Sept. 10). Thalian Hall. www.operahousetheatrecompany.net

Big Dawg Productions (est. 1995)

Unless you are one of the committed season patrons, it's likely the buzz you've heard is about their original production, *The Hermit of Fort Fisher*, by David Wright. One of the only remaining companies that doesn't opt for big name musicals, their dedication to the straight play (both in classic and bold form) is certainly worth the affordable ticket price. What's up next? *The Last Encampment* (March 23-April 6), *Over the River and Through the Woods* (April 27-May 14), *The Laramie Project* (June 8-25), *Twelve Angry Men* (Aug. 3-20), *The Hermit of Fort Fisher* (Sept. 7-24), *The Dining Room* (Nov. 2-19). Performs at Cape Fear Playhouse, 613 Castle St. www.bigdawgproductions.org

Cape Fear Theatre Arts (est. 2010)

Known for their consistently spectacular New Year's Eve gala productions (*Memphis, Sister Act*) with New York talent, we wish they'd do more. Former head honchos of the old City Stage at Level 5, Justin Smith and Chiaki Ito, are the "power couple" at work. Will there be something before 2018? Maybe, they say. www.citystagenc.com

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK STEELMAN, WES BROWN, LUCY HUTCHINSON, THEATRENOW

TheatreNOW (est. 2012)

A bit off the downtown beaten path, TheatreNOW marked our map with dinner theater, a proven welcome commodity. Most producers wouldn't drop their dimes on original scripts from local writers, but Alisa Harris and Zach Hanner buy local. Look out for plays from *Salt* contributors Clyde Edgerton and Celia Rivenbark.

What's up next? *Shamrock Holmes* (through March 25), *Killer Diller* (March 31-April 29), *The Cemetery Club* (May 5-27), The Best of Celia (June 2-July 22), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (July 28-Aug. 26), *Two Trains Running* (Sept. 1-30), *TheaTerror* (Oct. 6-31), *We Can Be Heroes* (Nov. 3-18), *The Greatest Gift* (Nov. 24-Dec. 23). TheatreNow, 19 South 10th Street. www.theatrewilmington.com

Dram Tree Shakespeare (est. 2015)

Making quite the impression with *MacBeth* and *The Tempest* mounted in the non-traditional theater space of McEachern's Warehouse, Dram Tree succeeded with two of the most engaging non-musical productions in years. By taking risks to introduce us to an immersive brand of theater and bringing in nationally acclaimed guest directors, though new to the fold, they are a welcome addition.

What's up next? *The Comedy of Errors* (April 13-30), directed by Philadelphia-based director KC MacMillan. Performs at DREAMS Garage, 901 Fanning St. www.dramtreeshakes.org

Panache Theatrical Productions (est. 2015)

After the tradition of *SantaLand Diaries* was broken at City Stage, Panache brought it back to great applause two years running. With the past year's exeunt of both City Stage Co. and The Browncoat Pub & Theatre, there's a particular void available for theater on-the-edge in Wilmington, and these guys seemed perfectly poised to fill it.

What's up next? *Heathers – The Musical* (March 16-April 2; Ruth & Bucky Stein Theatre at Thalian Hall) www.panachetheatre.com

Thalian Hall Cube Theatre (est. 2015)

A somewhat under-the-radar little company, spearheaded by Thalian Hall director Tony Rivenbark and Shane Fernando, has produced mini-masterpieces in the Ruth & Bucky Stein Theatre at Thalian Hall (*The Fantasticks*, *It's Only A Play*). This small stage brags high production value, particularly in set design by Gary Smith.

What's up next? *Deathtrap* (May 11–28). Ruth & Bucky Stein Theatre at Thalian Hall

For info: www.thalianhall.org/livetheatre

On the rise: Techmoja Dance and Theater Co., Second Star, Theatre for All, and Brunswick Little Theater.

Nicholas Gray is the former artistic director of City Stage Co.

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A Sorry Yardstick

Regrets? I've had a few . . .

By Susan Kelly

Say what you want about the Golden Rule and its cousin, WWJD; file away Ann Landers' famous chestnut, "Are you better off with or without him/her?" The axiom and adage and aphorism that trumps them all is this one: "How sorry will I be?"

How sorry will I be? applies to nearly every situation where you have to make a choice, a decision, or a judgment call. Watch this.

You've got to run to the grocery store for black olives for the taco salad. Your key fob is at the bottom of your bag. Your dry cleaning and a book on tape are the only things in the car. Seriously, who would want them? Why ruin a manicure digging, or waste precious minutes before *Jeopardy*! rummaging around for your keys to lock the car? Now is the time to ask yourself, how sorry will I be? If someone steals the book, right at the good part? How sorry will I be if someone steals the sweater that I wear every single week?

See? Endlessly applicable.

And again.

It's Saturday night and you're on to teach Sunday School at 9 the next day. Loving the convo and the gossip and the giggles. Waiter? Could I please — oh, wait. How sorry will I be if I have a third glass of wine? How sorry will I be if I just skip that funeral? How sorry will I be if I just wait until the next time the recycling truck comes around to take out the bin? How sorry will I be if I don't shave today?

Granted, much of the motivation behind the question is the lack thereof, i.e., laziness, inertia. But its uses range from the merely mundane to the life-threatening to the existential. How sorry will I be if I postpone signing/renewing this contract/will/passport? How sorry will I be if I agree to this project/promotion? How sorry will I be if I let this relationship carry on even though I have no intention of marrying him/her? How sorry will I be if, just this once, I skip the colonoscopy/mammogram? How sorry will I be if I go to Costco/Best Buy/Trader Joe's on a Saturday?

Works every time.

In a former life, Susan Kelly published five novels, won some awards, did some teaching, and made a lot of speeches. These days, she's freelancing and making up for all that time she spent indoors writing novels.

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A Legend at Lunch

The first Naismith female college player of the year – and acclaimed WNBA coach – bites down with gusto at Pine Valley Market

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

By Dana Sachs

For nearly three decades, Anne Donovan played a leading role in women's basketball, transforming herself from college superstar to international pro to successful coach in the Women's NBA, earning herself a spot in the Basketball Hall of Fame. She helped lead the U.S. Olympic team to gold medal victories in 1984 and 1988. Ten years later, she guided the team to gold again, this time as coach. Anne, as much as anyone, has helped set the tone and style of this prominent American sport.

So she has a lot of memorabilia.

But Anne, who retired from coaching in 2015 and relocated to Wilmington, only displays one photograph from her years in basketball. It's a 1988 image of Anne and the rest of Team USA standing on the medal platform listening to "The Star-Spangled Banner" – a personal reminder of a profound experience. Of all her time in basketball, those minutes spent listening to our national anthem mean the most. Anne calls it "indescribable" to bring such honor to the United States, "which is the greatest country in the world."

Anne and I get together for lunch at Pine Valley Market. When meeting Anne, people probably notice her height first – she's 6-foot-8 – but she has another equally noteworthy quality: an intense gaze. Over lunch, that intensity makes her an engaging conversationalist, but I suspect that, on the courts, it intimidated her opponents, too. Born in New Jersey in 1961, Anne gravitated to basketball early as, she says, "the youngest of eight kids, all tall." She and her siblings "grew up [playing the game] in the backyard" and by the time Anne reached high school, her skills had attracted national attention. She couldn't know for sure, however, that she'd play in college. It wasn't until 1972, when Congress passed Title IX, which guaranteed equal funding for women's college sports, that scholarships become widely available for talented female athletes. Title IX made a difference in Anne's own family. Her older sisters, also outstanding players, received few scholarship offers for college. By the time Anne applied, in 1979, she received 300. "I was a Title IX baby," she says.

Consequently, Anne had her choice of the country's top programs. She picked Old Dominion University because she wanted to learn from coach Marianne Stanley and play with the team's roster of talented athletes. "What I love about basketball is the relationship piece of it," she tells me. Quiet and observant – she calls herself "an introvert" – Anne liked playing on teams that felt like "mini-family" to her. Years later, she decided to create the same sort of community when she became a coach. Success took time, though. "My first players still talk about what a witch I was," she says, laughing. "If there's no trust there, then (criticism) is perceived as negative."

She graduated from college in 1983. Despite making two trips to the Final

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Four, setting an NCAA record for blocked shots — which still stands — and becoming the first female Naismith College Player of the Year, Anne found few professional opportunities in this country. After Old Dominion, she moved to Shizuoka, a village in rural Japan, and became the only American player on her team in the Japan Basketball League, Chanson. "I was just out of college and not very worldly," she says. "When I first got to Japan, it was a disaster." Suddenly, the shy girl who loved being one member of a "mini-family" found herself singled out. "The team's owner always had me sit next to him at banquets," she says, because "the foreigner was perceived as important." Those banquets presented another difficulty, too — the food. "I was the kid who had to have everything separate on my plate," Anne says. Suddenly, the unadventurous eater found herself face-to-face with raw fish and other dishes she'd never seen before.

Those days were "really challenging," Anne tells me, but they also helped her grow. She played in the Japan league for five years and, over time, even developed a passion for sushi. Now, she says, she's "a little bit braver" about food. At Pine Valley Market, the first thing to arrive at our table is the Jersey Sloppy Joe. If you hear the phrase "Sloppy Joe" and immediately think "Manwich," well, think again. The Jersey version is a gigantic club sandwich, with layers of turkey, ham, roast beef, corned beef and Swiss cheese stuffed between three slices of marble rye. "I don't think I ever would have ordered that," Anne tells me, eyeing the monument of protein. Then, she takes a bite. "Wow," she says, after a pause. Shredded super slaw and Thousand Island dressing give the sandwich a tangy crunch. "That's delicious."

Pine Valley Market first established itself as a gourmet shop and caterer, so its lunch menu is both innovative and wide-ranging. On the Turkey Apple Brie Hoagie, for example, thinly sliced red onion and raspberry aioli not only sweeten and deepen the flavors, but also give the otherwise pale ingredients a

fantastic blush of pink. Another shocker comes with the Big Pim, a BLT packed between two (yes, two) grilled pimiento cheese sandwiches. To our surprise, it's not as crazy as it sounds. "It has a different texture and flavor," Anne points out. "And I love cheese, so if you add cheese to a BLT, that's remarkable."

When Anne retired from professional basketball, she left her position as head coach of the Connecticut Sun. "I felt pretty beat up after that last go 'round," she says. "It was a good time to see if my heart was still in it." She doesn't rule out returning to coaching, but for now, she's focusing on her own health and well-being. After she moved to Wilmington, she tells me, she wanted to get back in shape, so she joined Crossfit.

I try to imagine that scenario. "What did they say when an Olympic athlete started working out with them?"

Anne shrugs. "They didn't say anything." The basketball legend seems gratified to be treated like any other 50-something at the gym, but I hear something else in her voice as well—an acceptance of the fact that life takes us through many stages. "That was 30 years ago," she tells me gently. "Most of us change in 30 years."

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Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores, online and throughout Wilmington.*

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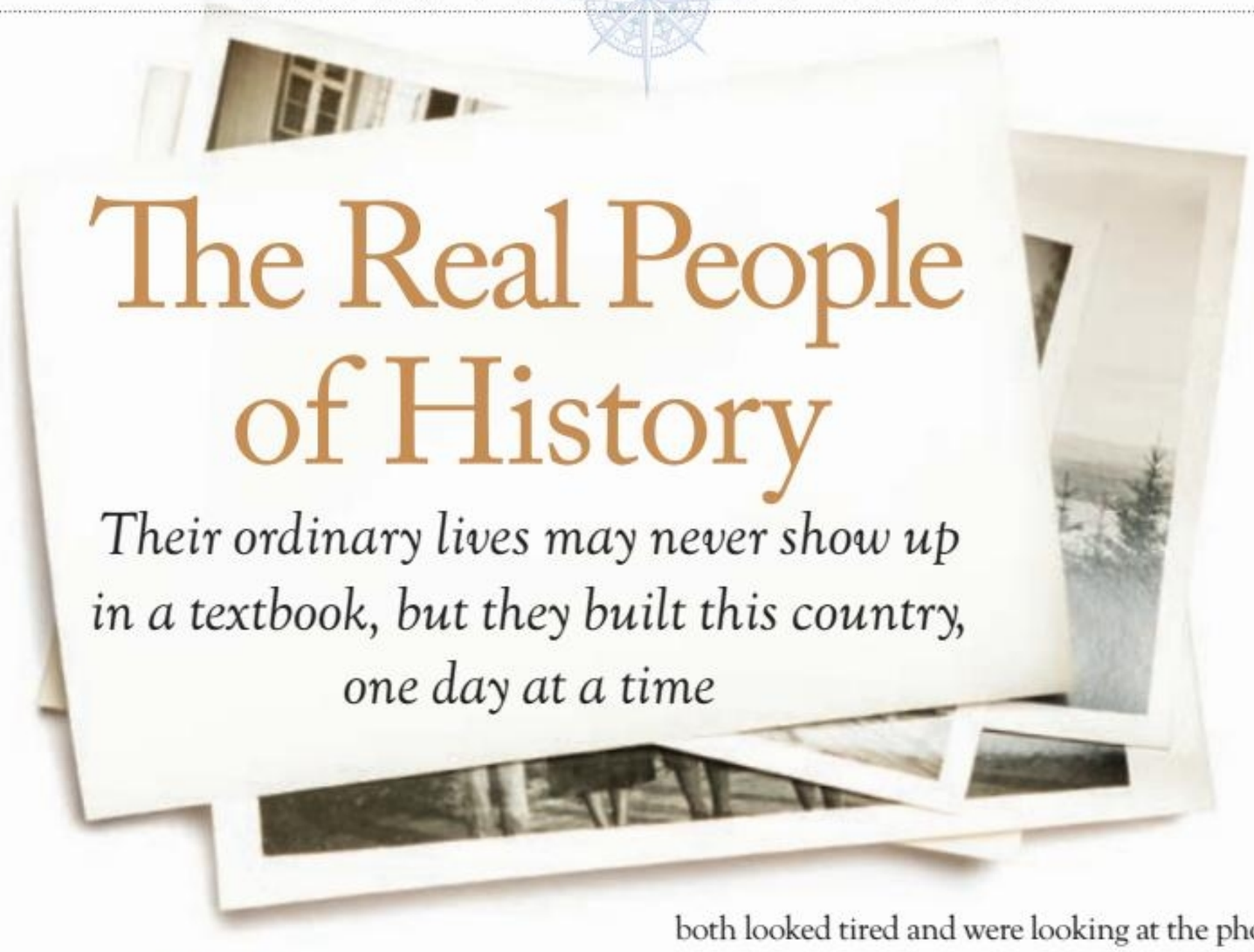


The Real People of History

Their ordinary lives may never show up in a textbook, but they built this country, one day at a time

By Bill Thompson

Sometimes we think history is just something we read about in books. All of what is now history was at one time current events. For me, that becomes more evident when I look at documentaries on television about "The Fifties," referring to the 1950s. The documentary approaches this period of time with the same relevance as the 1850s. It is hard for me to think of the two periods as having the same relevance, since the 1950s are still part of my perception of current events or, if you must, history.

All too often we think that history is just a lot of dates, recordings of wars, changes in geography with an endless array of documents that assure us those things are important. Of course, there are those famous people we read about, too: presidents and kings and queens, explorers and generals and such.

But even in the case of the 1950s we tend to look at the Korean War as the signature conflict that defined the time and the Cold War, the enduring element of the age. Some might say that other than that it was uneventful as historic decades go. Of course, this is not the case for those of us who lived then. What about the music and literature and the initial look at the civil rights movement. . . and saddle shoes and crew cuts and. . . you know, stuff like that? Personal stuff. That's history, too. Every decade, every event is more clearly defined by the people who lived it whether or not it is recorded in a textbook that way.

I was reminded of this verity as I was looking through a stack of old photographs the other day. I came across a picture I had never seen before, but the scene looked familiar. It looked a lot like some of the pictures I had seen of rural families in the South in the early part of the 20th century. It was a picture of a man and a woman sitting on the porch steps of an old farmhouse apparently under construction or in the process of remodeling, since the wood was unpainted and a ladder was leaning against the roof of the porch. You could tell the couple were not posing for the picture. They both looked tired and were looking at the photographer only because he happened to be there.

In the foreground was a sturdy looking mule hitched to a drag (a flat, wooden sled about 5 feet long and 2 feet wide). The mule's harness was standard working gear, no fancy leather. Chains were hooked from the harness to the singletree and attached to the drag. Plain cotton ropes (called plow lines) were the reins. On the drag were two large sacks and sitting on the sacks was a little girl who looked to be about 5 years old. She was holding the rope reins tightly in her hands, watching the mule as if he were her responsibility alone.

Standing beside the drag was a little boy maybe just a year or so older than the girl. Already he was preparing to take his place as a contributing member of the family. He was clad in bib overalls and a long-sleeved knit shirt. I couldn't tell if he was wearing shoes because his pant legs came all the way to the ground. His stance told me he was ready for any challenge. He stood facing the camera, his legs spread slightly apart, his thumbs stuck in his pants pockets and his eyes squinted at the photographer. It was not a defiant pose but one of confidence, an admirable trait for a man of any age.

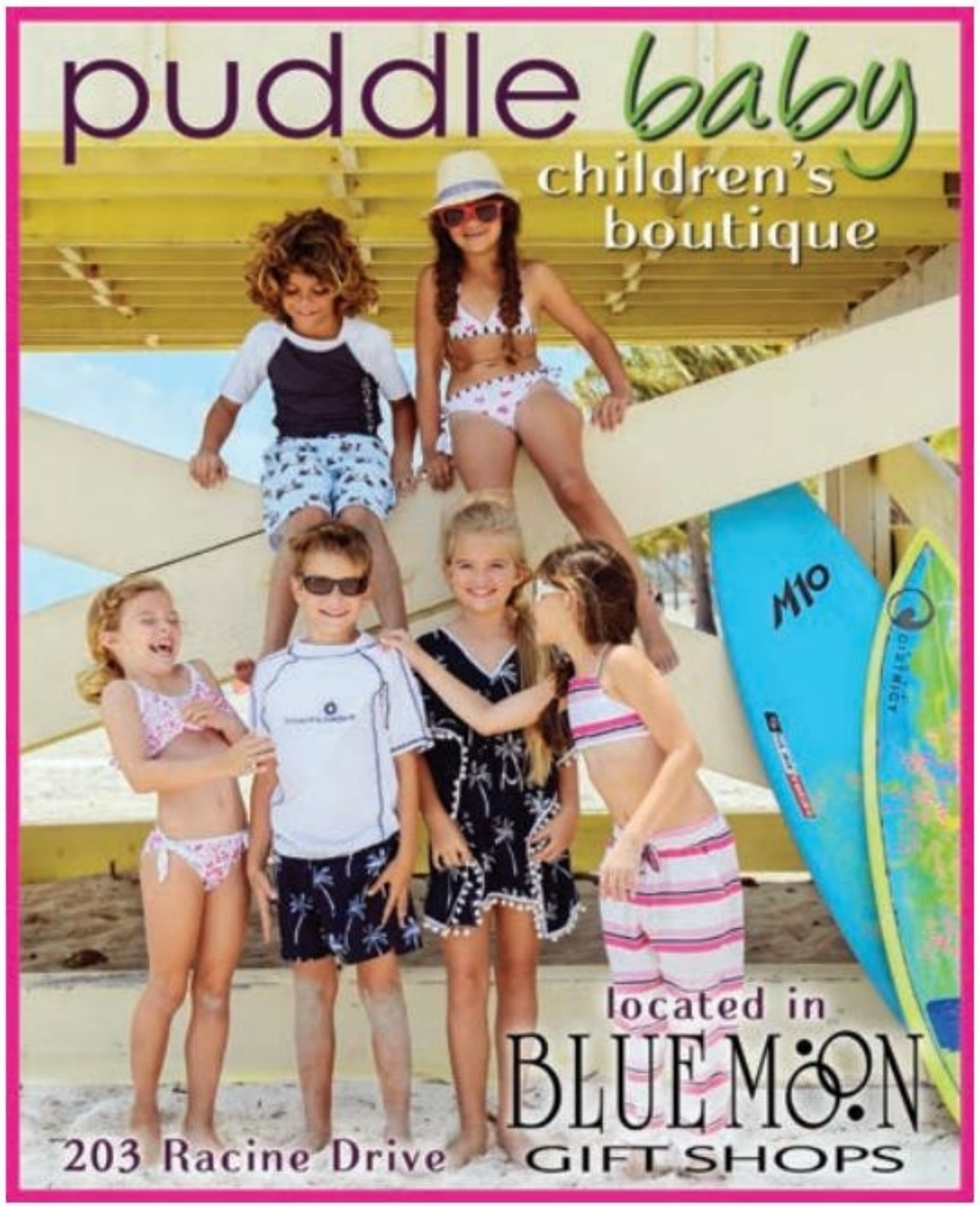
As I looked at that photograph, I thought of all the other families like that one: farm families who made their own way, who tilled the land and harvested and sold their crops, just to do it all again year after year. That was their life. And for them it was a good one. They would face hardships and struggles, but they would not only survive but prevail over those struggles to make a good life for themselves and their family.

Families like those in the photograph are the real people of history. Their names would never show up in a textbook, but their lives shaped this country as surely as any war that was ever fought or any document that was ever written. They weren't rich but they weren't poor, either. They helped make up that segment of this country we call "middle America." That's most of us.

In this modern age I'm afraid history forgets about those people like the ones in the photograph. But I won't forget them because I know who they are. The couple sitting on the porch are my grandmother and grandfather. The little girl was my aunt. The confident little boy was my father.

History is not something you read about in books. History is people.

Bill Thompson is a regular Salt *contributor. His newest novel,* Chasing Jubal, *is a coming of age story of two brothers set in the Blue Ridge in the 1950s, but steeped in Confederate history. Available where books are sold. www.billthompsondownhome.com*



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Mind Your Own Biscuits

At Cast Iron Kitchen, you'll find the Holy Trinity of great biscuits and good sausage gravy

By Jason Frye

There are three little words every Southern man longs to hear: Biscuits and Gravy.

Of course, if time is short, you can cut it down to two: and Gravy.

Or, if you're talking to me, you can keep it at one word: Biscuits.

I love biscuits, and that holy trinity — Biscuits and Gravy ("Trinity?" you ask. "But there are only two things there, biscuits and gravy." You're forgetting the sausage. It's in the gravy) — is worth driving up Market Street for. But you can hide a bad biscuit under some good gravy. And you can hide some middling gravy under some good sausage, so to truly excel at Biscuits and Gravy you've got to bring it in all three phases of the game.

This is something I don't think many Yankees get.

I don't mean to be reductive, but it's true. Biscuits, like grits, are lost on those unfortunate enough to have been raised in the North. (Likewise Southerners just can't make a good bagel and know nothing when it comes to diners (parenthetical inside the parenthetical: Where's Wilmington's hopping diner scene? You know, the 24-hour joint that will satisfy your midnight craving for crispy hash browns or your pre-dawn hankering for pancakes?))

Take my father-in-law. He traded Connecticut for Southport and is a man who loves bread and pastry, but not the biscuit. He accuses biscuits of being too dry or too crumbly or too salty. But all of those elements converge for a good biscuit. Granted, a good biscuit can be ruined by being too dry, crumbly or salty, or not buttermilk-y enough or if the cook used warm butter instead of cold butter or if the dough was kneaded too thoroughly. In short, we are both tough customers.

That's why I want to take him to Cast Iron Kitchen. They nail the biscuit like no other place around.

Properly done biscuits tend to come in two varieties: the tall, fluffy, flaky biscuit; and the short, wide, slightly more dense biscuit. Cast Iron Kitchen's falls into the latter category, which means plenty of buttery, salty top (the second best part next to the flaky center, which is only slightly less good than the cast iron-crisp bottom) and, thanks to the size of their biscuit, plenty of surface area for gravy or other toppings.

You can get an order of biscuits and gravy — a pair of biscuits with a lovely, light (for gravy) gravy combining country sausage and chorizo — or you can get a breakfast sammich. For maximum biscuititude you have to go for the Dirty South Biscuit, a sloppy little gravy-soaked knife-and-fork biscuit sandwich that brings together a fried chicken tenderloin, bacon, melty Muenster and pepper Jack cheeses, and a runny egg. My fellow Southerners, it's a beautiful thing.

Jason Frye is a regular Salt *contributor and you can keep track of what and where he eats by following him on Instagram: @beardedwriter. He's a self-proclaimed biscuit-head.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW SHERMAN

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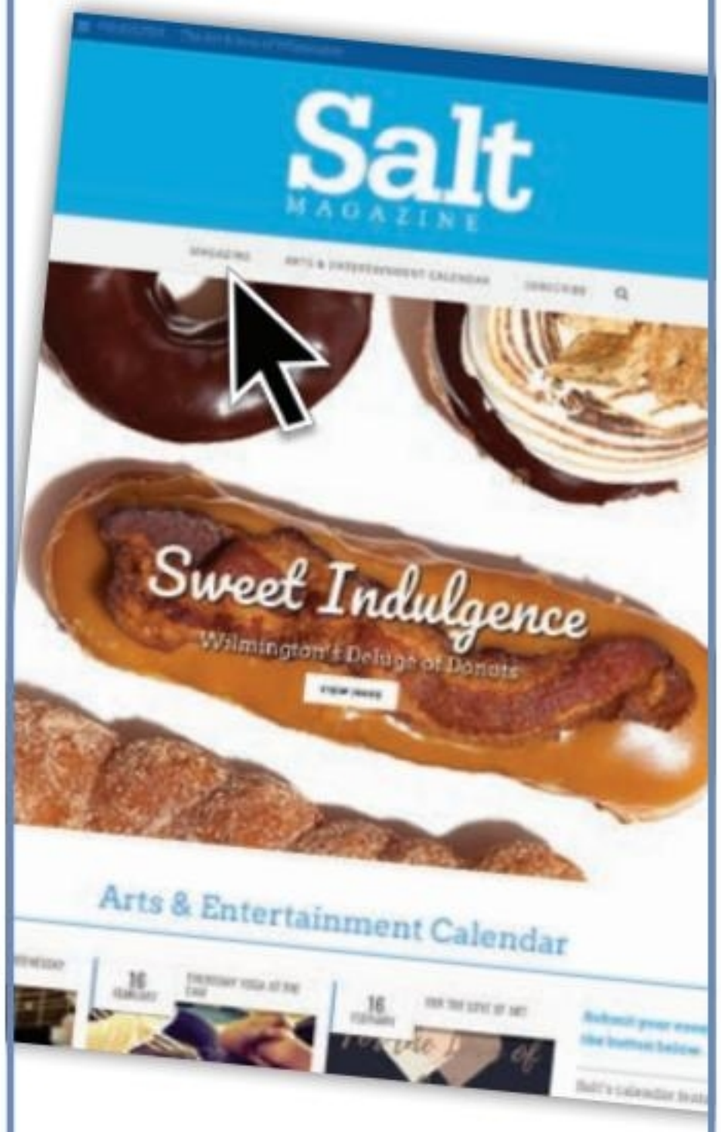

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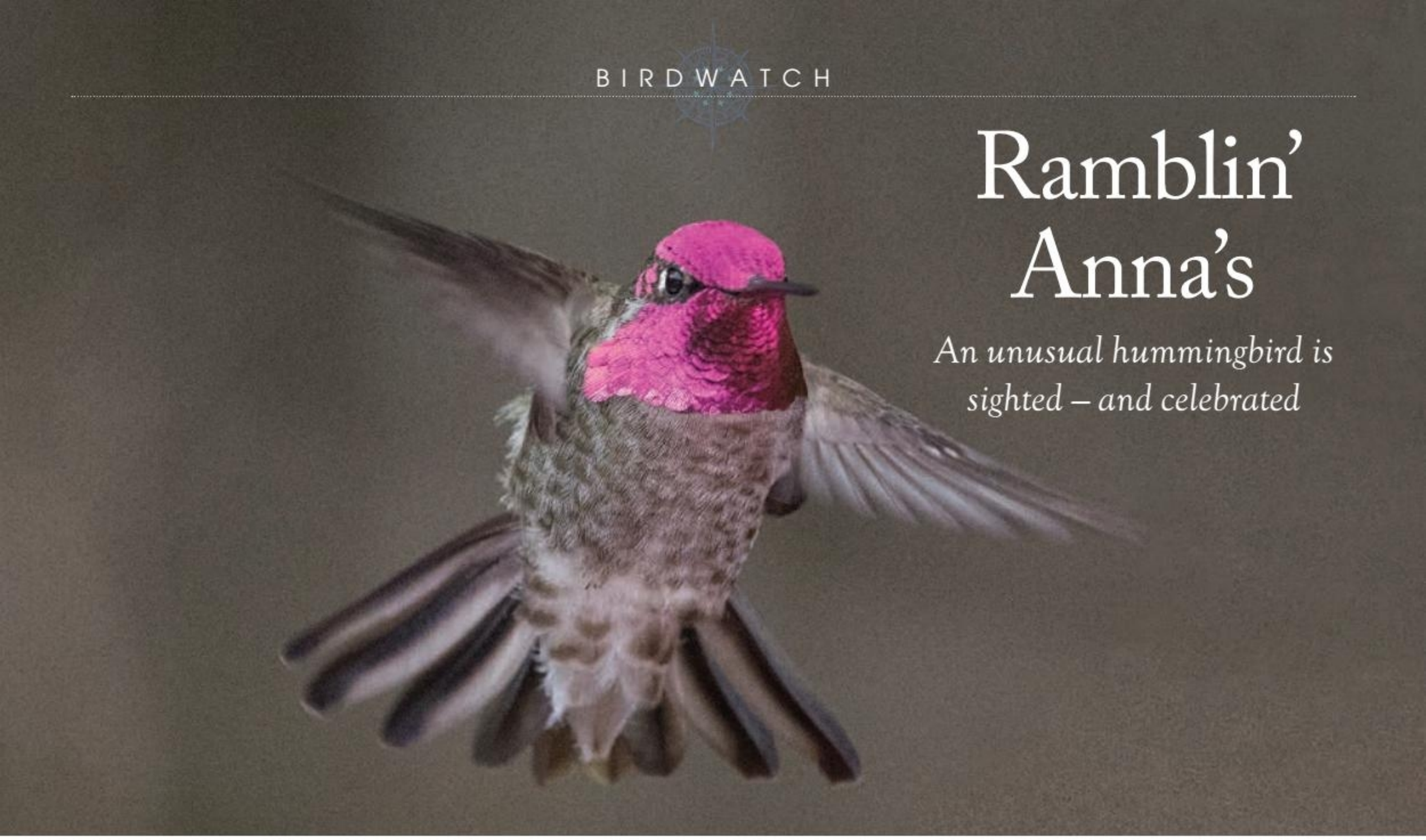


Ramblin' Anna's

An unusual hummingbird is sighted – and celebrated

By Susan Campbell

Every now and then – it happens more than you would think – an out-of-place bird appears. Sometimes on a beach, at a feeder, or by the side of the road, these wayward individuals may be on the move, so that a quick glimpse is all that you get. But in some instances, for whatever reason, the bird decides to stay awhile.

Depending on how distant the bird's origin, it may cause quite a stir among birdwatchers – or more accurately, birders. Birders are enthusiasts who track the species they see over time and in different places. For these folks, vagrants are a very big deal.

Recently, an odd-looking, noisy and aggressive hummingbird was seen in a neighborhood on Hatteras Island. Fortunately, it was using a sugar water feeder that belonged to an avid birder and hummingbird photographer who realized it was special – and that bird lovers would be interested in knowing about it. It is likely this bird had also been visiting other feeders on this street, but residents did not think anything of it. Along the coast, hummingbirds can be found in any month, and different species can go unnoticed in the flurry at the feeder.

Within minutes of this particular bird's arrival I got an excited call (the homeowners are good friends and longtime year-round hummingbird hosts) and then, shortly thereafter, received the first photos that made clear that the unusual hummingbird was an Anna's. It's a species not at all expected in our area. (Common in the northwestern U.S., most Anna's hummingbirds head south of the border for the colder months, not east.) Only two others, both males, have spent the winter in our state. The most recent individual returned to the same feeder for a second winter in New Bern during 2011. So this winter's bird was not only unprecedented but an extremely exciting find for North Carolina – and in January, no less!

I quickly packed my gear and headed eastward in order to trap and band this little marvel the next day. (I am a licensed bird bander with special training just for hummingbirds.) At first light, it went like clockwork, and before I knew it, I had the wayward hummingbird in my hand: a feisty and healthy adult male Anna's hummingbird. In a matter of minutes, he was processed, photographed and then back out terrorizing the wintering ruby-throateds there in the neighborhood. He had no evident fat, suggesting that he might stick around awhile. A bird in migratory mode would require energy reserves for the journey northward. However, he may decide to wander, given the quality of hummingbird habitat; food is plentiful in the area.

Excited local birdwatchers began dropping by to see this handsome fella immediately after the word went out. He was not hard to locate: usually perched high in "his" tangle of vines right above "his" feeder. Everyone has been thinking the same thing: Why is this Anna's in this yard along the Outer Banks and not along the West Coast or in Mexico, where he belongs? Unfortunately, this is a question I cannot answer. He might have been caught up in a front that moved eastward in the last month or two, or maybe he headed 90 degrees in the wrong direction and went south and east from the breeding grounds. Birds have wings and, thus, can hypothetically show up anywhere, anytime. Whatever the reason, the hummer-loving hosts, as well as bird enthusiasts making the trip, will continue to marvel at this drifter's antics as long as he cares to stay.

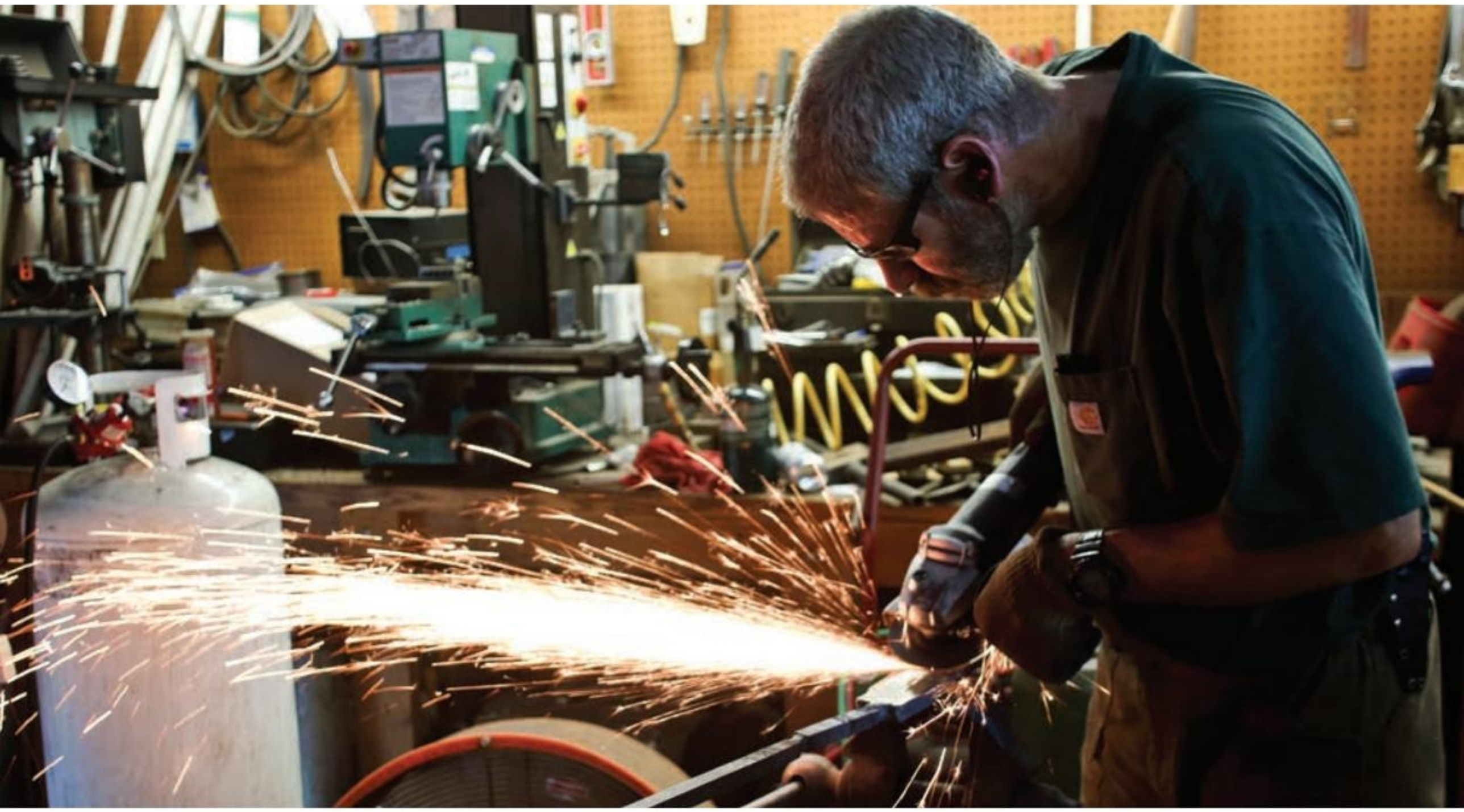
If you are interested in viewing this hummingbird, please contact me and I will be happy to give you an update and location information – if he is still present.

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos at susan@ncaves.com.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANN MADDOCK

This Side of Valyria

A Bladen County Master Smith forges mythic steel



By Virginia Holman

If you're a fan of *Game of Thrones*, you know that Valyrian steel is the finest ever forged, its process lost during the Doom. The surviving swords are highly valued objects, imbued with magic capable of destroying a White Walker. What you may not know is that author George R.R. Martin's model for Valyrian steel was real-world Damascus steel. This legendary steel was named by crusaders in 900 A.D. Syria, who witnessed these damask-patterned steel blades shatter opponents' swords without dulling. The secret to creating Damascus steel spanned continents, but was so closely guarded that eventually it was lost for many centuries.

Damascus steel captured the imaginations of many, not only due to its superior sharpness and unique beauty, but because of its fascinating lore. Crusaders reported that the Saracens' Damascus blades could slice a falling feather or a silk scarf tossed in the air. There were also claims that the steel was infused with magic during the "quenching." In a 1981 *New York Times* article, Dr. Helmut Nickel (yes, that's his real name), then curator of the Arms and Armor Division of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, noted ancient sources that claimed quenchings as varied as "dragon blood or donkey urine . . . the urine of redheaded boys or that from a 'three-year-old goat fed only ferns for three days.'" The same article also notes that "writings found in Asia Minor said that to temper a Damascus sword the blade must be heated until it glows 'like the sun rising in the desert.' It then should be cooled to the color of royal purple and plunged 'into the body of a muscular slave' so that his strength would be transferred to the sword."

These vivid legends endured, doubtless used to intimidate enemies long before they met on the battlefield. They also fueled the imaginations of children like the young Scott McGhee, who grew up to become one of the finest knife and sword makers this side of Valyria.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LYDIA MCGHEE

The morning I journey to Master Bladesmith Scott McGhee's workshop in rural Bladen County feels vaguely otherworldly. The rain pours down in torrents until U.S. 74 becomes a shallow running river. Traffic slows. Eventually, I see why: A light pickup truck without ballast is ahead, spun 180 degrees against the concrete barrier. A couple of miles on, the rain refuses to relent; I feel my tires shudder and I pull over in Leland to wait for a break in the weather. Once the rain passes, mist hovers above the swampland flanking the road, the same swamps that surged with whitewater during Hurricane Matthew.

Eventually, toward Clarkton, the land begins to rise and dip, and the road stretches ahead like a lonely gray ribbon.

When I arrive at Bluefield Acres farm, Scott's in his shop with Lydia, his wife and business partner, and their stouthearted cattle dog Angus. They look like something out of a storybook. He's tall and rangy with a close-cropped beard, his intense blue eyes framed by small gold-rimmed spectacles. His feet are shod with heavy work boots, and he's wearing, of all things, an army green wool kilt. Lydia is tall and fine boned with piercing sky-blue eyes, her tanned face framed by a cloud of silver corkscrew curls.

Scott began making knives seriously in 2009. Prior to that, he was a forester and then an arborist. The recession and an on-the-job freak accident that left him with three broken ribs were the catalysts for his career change.

"I was blacksmithing as a hobby," he says in his broad North Carolina drawl, "and my wife posted a picture of it on her Facebook page—"

"—and," Lydia breaks in, "a friend of mine from high school said he wanted to buy it, so we came up with a price—"

"—and I sold my first knife," Scott says.

"That's when the lightbulb turned on, and we started to think that this could be a new career for Scott."

Truth be told, it's not as if Scott woke up one morning and decided to become a knife maker; he'd been blacksmithing for decades. "When I was about 14, my uncle left some of his blacksmithing tools and a horseshoe forge in my

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parents' workshop." Scott was drawn to them and secretly began trying to teach himself how to forge. "I found some great big lumps of boiler coal and figured out how to set them on fire in the forge. It was a complete disaster." His secret was out when fumes forced him out into the yard where — gasping for breath — he collapsed from heatstroke in front of his mother, Peggy McGhee, just as she arrived home from her job as Franklin County school superintendent.

"I was lucky. My mother was a lifelong educator, so she didn't punish me. She knew I needed instruction or I was going to kill myself or burn something down. Eventually, she got me enrolled at the Penland School of Crafts in the second ever blacksmithing class."

That was in 1980, and the blacksmithing workshop at Penland was spartan, just a small room set off from the glassblowing workshop. "All it had was one outlet, one lightbulb, a rack of steel, an acetylene cutting torch, a few forges, some tongs, anvils and hammers. That's all there was," Scott remembers. "The instructor came in, and he was grizzled for his age, smoking Camel cigarettes, wearing a cut-off T-shirt and a pair of cut-off shorts that had been patched and patched and patched. His entire belly was black with slag that was buried in it from blacksmithing, and his shorts had all these burn holes in them. He said, 'I don't know what they told you about this class, but it's all bullshit. Look around here, boys and girls, there is nothing here. We're making tools. You will make three sets of tongs, three hammers, and three anvil tools. Once you complete making said tools, you can make anything you want.' So we supplied the entire shop. It was also the first place I was introduced to basic pattern-welded or Damascus steel. At the time, our instructor was one of about six people in the country who knew how to create and work with Damascus." Moreover, Scott notes how valuable that experience was to him as a craftsman and artist. "If you can create the tools you use and heat the steel in a forge you made, then there's more of you in the blade."

Scott's designs are inspired by the natural world. "I see knives in everything. I can look at the shape of a raptor's talons or the bend in a tree branch, and it inspires me to create a knife." His process is all freehand. "I never know the length of a knife I'm making until I make it." He brings out one of his many artist's notepads. "First, I make a sketch, never on graph paper, because if you sketch on graph paper, you are always using those straight lines as a reference, and knives are all about curves and balance." He then uses his artist's rendition to forge the knife. "I'll make a blueprint and then a wooden pattern, so I have something to forge to. Sometimes, if I really like a knife, I will make a metal pattern." A metal pattern allows him to lay

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the metal on the hot steel to check the shape as he forges the blade. He also outlines the blade on the anvil as a point of reference.

It all sounds rather straightforward until you look at Scott's knives: elegant, perfectly balanced precision blades, and then you begin to believe that he, too, imbues his blades with magic. He hands me a tactical knife that he's forged from Damascus steel. When you hold one of Scott's knives, it truly feels like an extension of your body. It's perfectly calibrated. The Damascus blade shimmers like rippled water. The patterns on the knife aren't haphazard but rendered with great intention.

Lydia says, "Scott has this ability, I don't have it, to visualize something in three dimensions. He gets an idea for a specific damask pattern and he is able to render it from the steel." To control the pattern he creates a billet, a block of different carbon content steels that will forge well together. One usually has a higher nickel content than the other. He hands me a billet of steel ready to be forged; it is stacked with 35 layers of steel, each as thin as phyllo dough. Once the steel is forged, Scott will hammer and fold the steel over and over, sometimes twisting it, to get the exact pattern he wants. Like a great sculptor, he sees a blade's shape and pattern in the block of steel, and patiently coaxes it into being. This is a testament to his skill and craftsmanship, but I have to admit, the leap from billet to blade seems a sort of alchemy.

Others think so too. He's now a full-time bladesmith and has achieved the highest level of certification, Master Smith, from the rigorous American Bladesmith Association (ABS). There are only 119 Master Smiths in the world. His gorgeous custom knives sell as soon as Lydia posts them online, and two of his tactical designs have been leased by Böker for limited edition production runs. As he's become better known, everyone from chefs to students has sought him out. (Chef Lee Grossman at Bento Box commissioned a set of custom chef's knives.) For a time, Scott taught out of his workshop, but now that his business is booming, he teaches for the ABS at "hammer-ins" across the country to keep the art of the forged blade alive.

To see more of Scott McGhee's work and process, visit www.guineahogforge.com. To order kitchen or carrying knives, email guineahogforge@gmail.com

Want to learn the art of the forged blade? Resister for Scott's week-long introductory class at Haywood Community College online at www.americanbladesmith.com or call 828-627-2135.

Author Virginia Holman, a regular Salt *contributor, teaches in the creative writing department at UNC Wilmington.*

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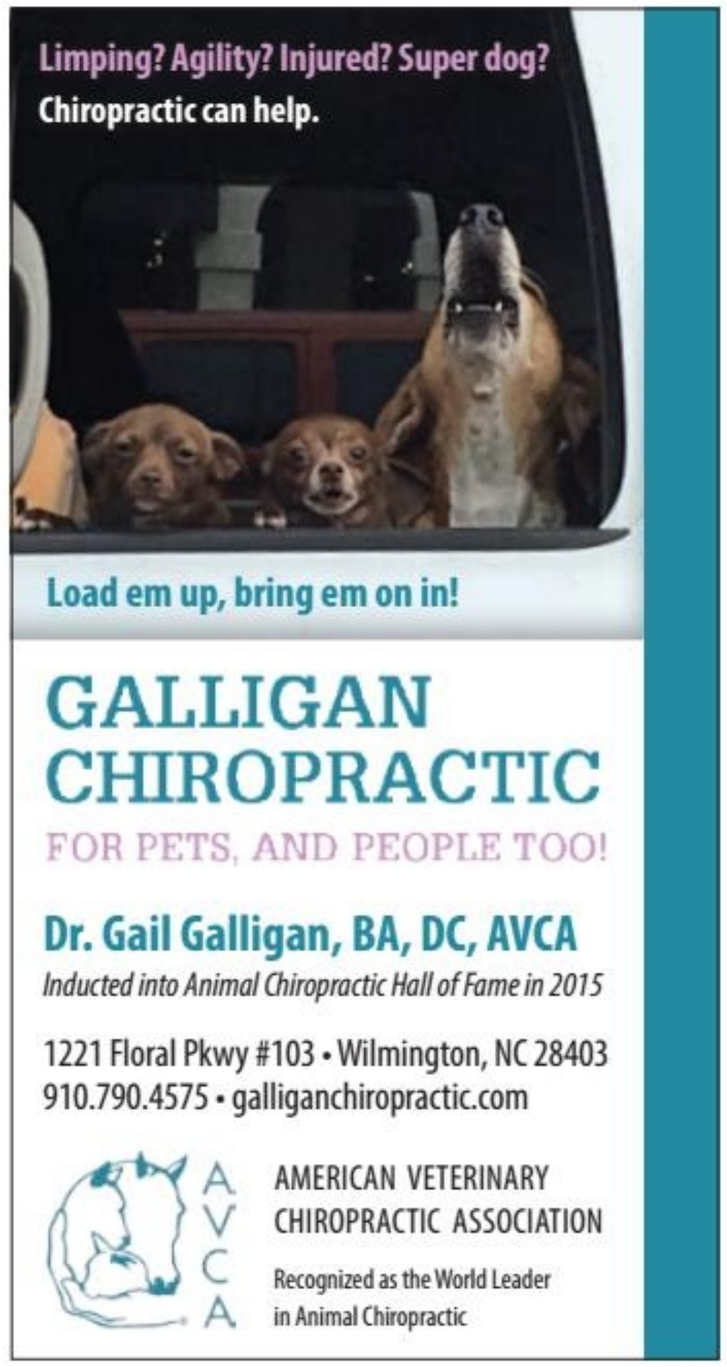
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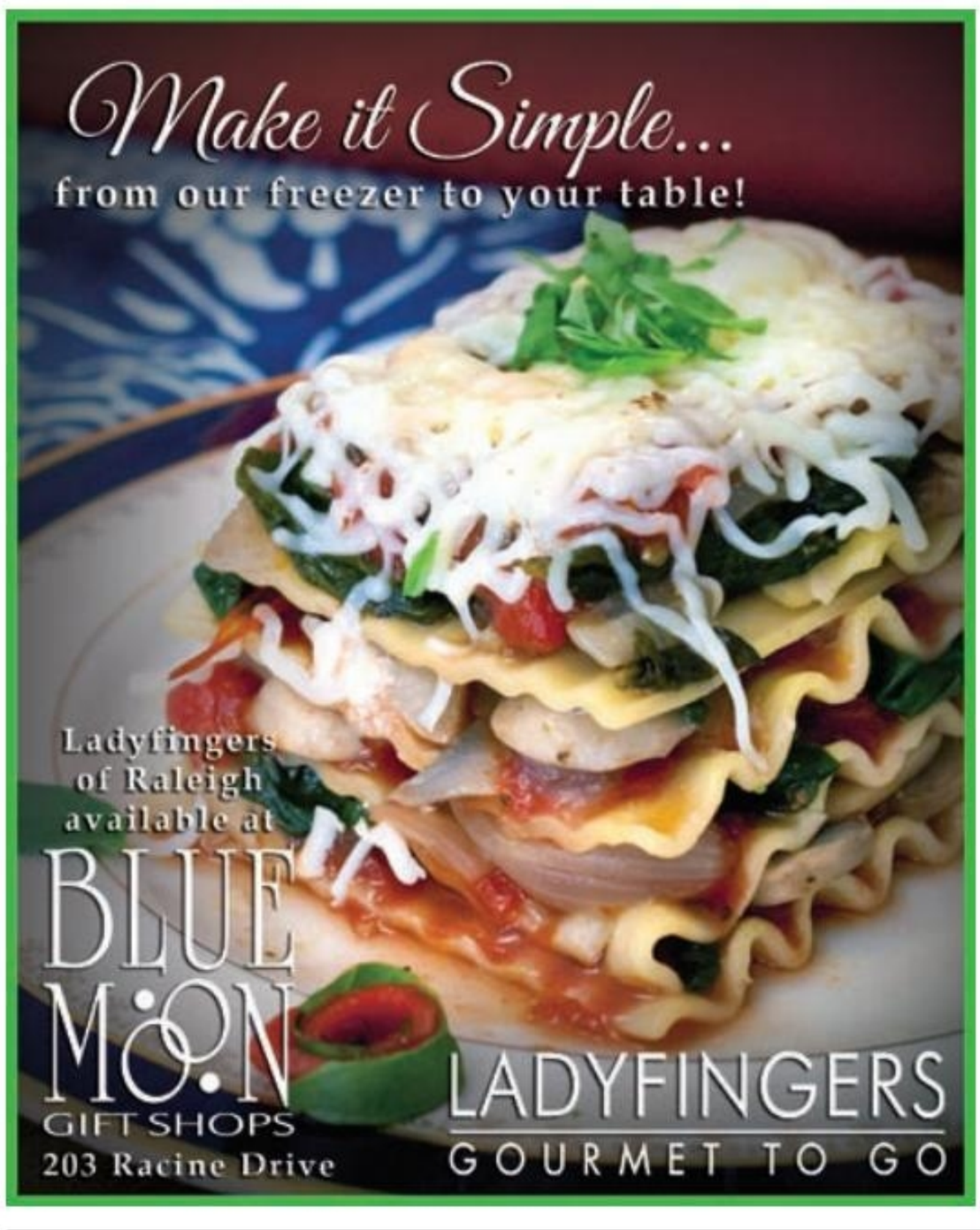

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Hawk

Driving to work, I spotted
the red-tailed hawk perched on the stop sign

at the corner of Courtland & Adams.
Surveying the suburban yards

for his next meal, he looked in my direction,
then turned away, disinterested.

I lowered my eyes to check the time
and when I looked up again he was gone,

leaving me alone in the warm comfort of my car,
delighted by what I'd seen,

desperate for his return.

–*Steve Cushman*

The Makers Among Us

Hidden in the Port City's urban nooks and crannies are creative makers galore. They take to wood or wire. High-end or high-tech. They shape ships or sounds. Like soothsayers, they hold material in hand and conjure. Each maker is committed to process and a product: Inventing, assessing, refining pushes their craft, their creation, into being.

As the Wood Turns

The artist who makes mushrooms out of twigs

By Mark Holmberg · Photograph by Andrew Sherman

There's a treelike spirit of calm and steadiness that radiates from 73-year-old Jean LeGwin, especially when she's turning a piece of wood and the chips mist around her.

"Totally zen," she says. "Time falls away."

Finding her and her work is like a soothing and surprising gift at the end of a quiet little road near Ogden Elementary School. There, on a sweet spit of land overlooking Page Creek, sits her unique aluminum, steel and wood trio of buildings — home, shop and shed — designed by Wilmington architect Michael Kersting.

It's a place that inspires. And LeGwin is totally inspired. Her 28 years of woodturning have only honed her passion for all of its possibilities.

"There are so many things you can do with woodturning," she says. "Objects you'd never guess were turned."

And here's where this story turns: This shy, gentle, zen-like woman is an absolute woodturning brawler — pushing the envelope, going smaller, thinner, deeper, more difficult — "playing with forms," as she puts it.

Look at her tiny, copper-detailed box turned out of one piece of wood. No way! Or a bowl so thin you could use it for a lampshade. How did that not shatter while turning or sanding? And how could a human hollow out a bark-infused ball of oak and make the walls that thin, all through a pinkie-sized hole in the top?

"I like challenge," she says.

First, she pictures a finished piece. "How do you get there? What are the problems? Every step brings a new set of problems. How do you solve them?"

Her passion began in childhood, when she loved to whittle. (When was the last time you saw someone do that?) "I was fortunate to have a father who was always working with wood," LeGwin says.

In Boston, where she owned a design and layout firm in the high-stress world of publishing, she took a woodworking class to unwind. "I got totally hooked."

When she retired and sold her business after 35 years, she came to the family land on Pages Creek and built her home and shop and joined the Wilmington Area Woodturners Association. Her shop is a woodworkers dream, anchored by her beloved Stubby lathe from Australia.

This is a woman who knows and loves wood. Her favorite? "I try to get free wood," she said with a smile. Cherry is cherished by her. But she has and loves a little bit of everything from around world, even random shipping dunnage and exotic seed pods from Africa. What she doesn't like is wasted wood. "Even twigs," she says. "I make little mushrooms out of them."

That's how her world turns.

Wired Wizards

A high school robotics team aims high

By Christine Hennessey · Photograph by Mark Steelman

What if you had six weeks to build and program an industrial-size robot? What if that robot had to play a complex field game against other robots? Your team would have strict rules, limited resources and money to raise. And you'd still have to go to high school. If you were a Wired Wizard, you'd take on the challenge. Not only that — you'd accomplish it, too.

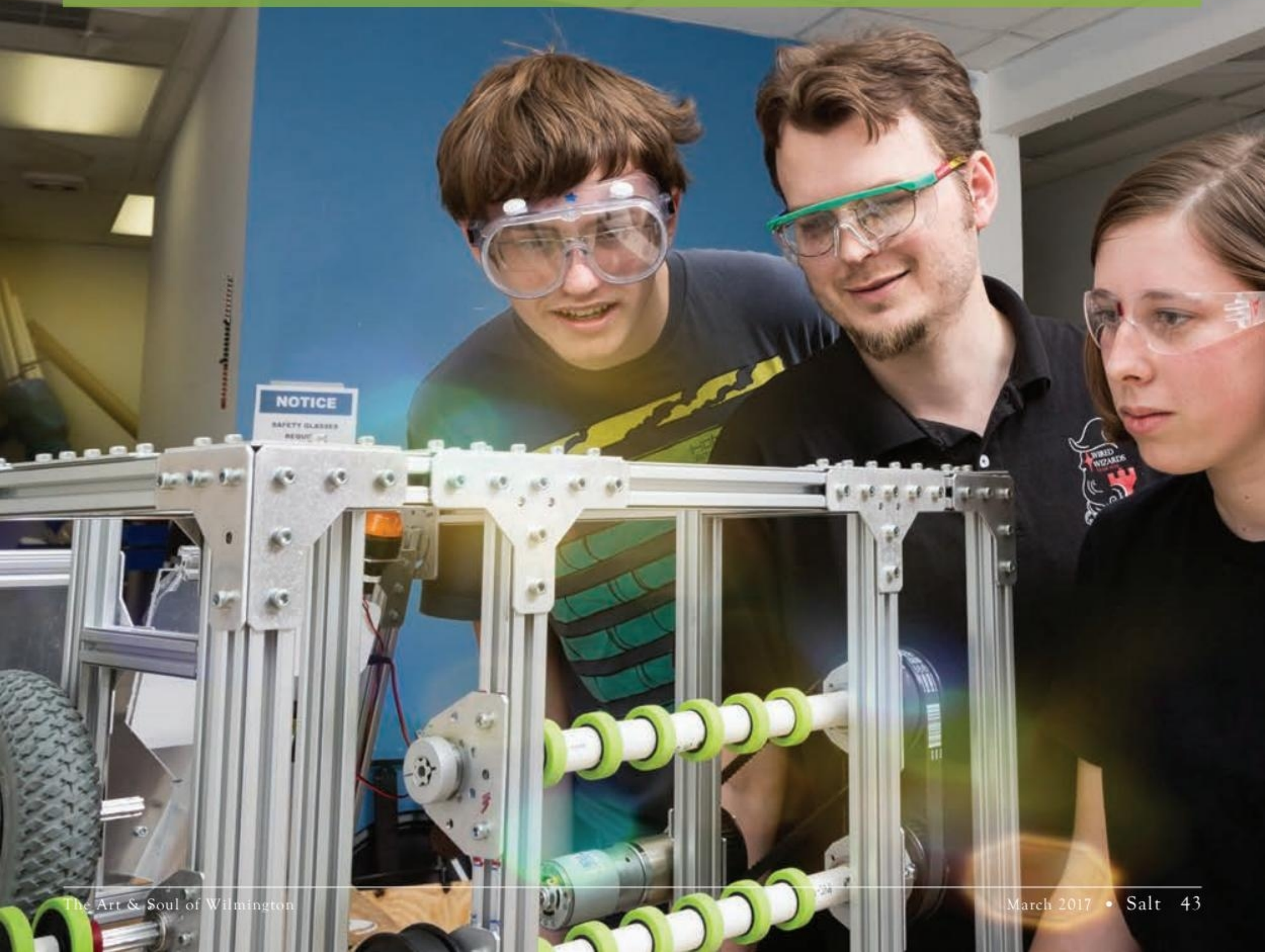
The Wired Wizards are a team of 25 students from high schools across New Hanover County who build and program robots. Founded in 2012 and supported by Port City Robotics, a local organization that fosters STEM opportunities for area youth, the Wired Wizards are split into three major components. The Build team is responsible for building the robot, which includes construction and electrical wiring. The Programming team writes the software that enables the robot to play the game. Finally, the Business Development team is responsible for marketing, fundraising, event planning and community outreach.

Their ultimate goal? Competing in the FIRST Robotics Challenge, an international competition that combines the excitement of a sporting event with the challenges of science. Last year the Wired Wizards won North Carolina's State Engineering Inspiration Award and were one of 900 teams to qualify for and travel to the World Championships in St. Louis. This year, they hope to go even further.

Benjamin Barbour, president of Port City Robotics, has an additional goal for the group. He's taking the long view. He wants the team to put southeastern North Carolina on the map for robotics and other tech fields. When businesses are looking for employees who are ready to tackle the latest technological challenges, he hopes they look here first. And the wizards will be ready.

So far, his plan seems to be working. The majority of Wired Wizards have gone on to college in STEM-related fields or confirmed their passion for communications, marketing and business. By working hard and working together, they've prepared themselves for a bright and successful future, all the while having fun, building robots, and leading the next generation of Wilmington's tech community.

Learn more at www.wiredwizards.org



The Guru of Tone

Guitar notes like a seraphic choir

By John Wolfe • Photograph by Mark Steelman

Move over Menlo Park. Michael Swart is the Wizard of Carolina Place. Swart, founder of the Swart Amplifier Company, builds guitar amps that produce a feeling of directness. There is as little electrical interference as possible between what the musician plays and what the audience hears – a feat that takes quite a lot of engineering. He's become quite famous for his amps, not surprisingly, garnering devotees like Joey Santiago of The Pixies and The Martinis, Jeff Tweedy of Wilco, one of the guys from They Might Be Giants, and even the Crown Prince of Jam himself, Trey Anastasio of Phish phame.

In his Wrightsville Avenue workshop, Swart is surrounded by vintage machines, machines from a time when things were built to last or at least, to be tinkered with: a VW bug, BSA motorcycles, a VéloSoleX French moped. He prefers the '50s and '60s. "Each thing almost talks to me, gives me a story," he says.

The story of how Swart went from musician and tinker man to boutique amp guru begins at the Starway Flea Market. "I bought an old Supro for like 40 bucks," and he got to work. With help from a woodworker uncle (to build the boxes), a Web-savvy college friend and Swart designing amps from vintage technology, a career was launched. "Every time we put an amp up on eBay, it sold. I think we sold five or six amps the first year, and then I started developing an amp that had reverb and tremolo – that's what I always wanted to do."

The result was the Space Tone Reverb, the signature guitar effect of Swart.

"Here," he says, gesturing to what could have been a prop from a schlocky sci-fi movie: a plywood plank with exposed circuitry and several shrunken lightbulbs, which turn out to be tubes. "This is what I've been working on," he says. He flips a switch to warm up the device, which he tells me is a new kind of push-pull amplifier. "It's still a prototype; I haven't released it yet." The tubes glow a soft orange. He smiles. "I grew up with an old Silvertone stereo in the house. I would turn it on and peek in the back to watch the tubes glow. It's like looking at space. You can actually see electrons flying from this plate to that plate."

He plugs in his red guitar, switches the amplifier on, and begins to play. Chords cascade sweetly from the speaker. The tone is grand and full, filling the room with an aching sonic beauty, the notes like a seraphic choir. Subtle thoughts – electric pulses firing between the neurons in the brains – tumble out joyfully into the big world of vibrating molecules. Swart twirls a dial, strums the strings, reverberating sound upward through the roof into the stratosphere high above Wilmington.

www.swartamps.com

Hand to Wood

Where wood is manifested into boats

By John Wolfe · Photograph by Andrew Sherman

Mark Bayne, the lead instructor of the school of wooden boat building, is a lion-built man with a mane of graying hair swept back. He speaks with efficiency because he's got work to do. His shop will produce three new boats this year. A career boat builder, he graduated from Cape Fear Community College's inaugural boat building class in 1979 and boomeranged back to run the program.

Like all good workshops, Bayne's is loud and well-lit and redolent of sawdust. Inside are big saws and drill presses, stationary planers and vacuum hoses. Outside, on the bank of the river, rest sleek sailing dinghies, elegant and fragile as upturned shells of walnuts; stout little work skiffs, heavy with the promise of fish.

Boat design takes its first step inside, in the "loft." Lofting, as Mark explains it, is life-sized marine drafting. The floor is white and gridded, overlaid with full-sized organic curves from which classic boats are crafted, scaled up in pencil from smaller plans. The next step: Manifest these shapes in wood.

On the shop floor below, two students work. Kent Harrell, retired engineer, grew up ("at least, I attempted to,") in eastern North Carolina, and learned to water-ski behind a Simmons Sea Skiff. He's wanted one ever since. After 20 years of waiting, he's finally building his boat. At the moment it's a stack of lumber on the floor, a model on a table, a dream in his mind.

Zach Medeiros, a young man with a black beard and perpetual half-smile, doesn't know of a single boat built exactly to its plans. "There's always changes along the way," he says. For instance, when they built the Simmons model and flipped it over, they realized the stringers made an inaccessible place where water could collect and rot the hull. So they're nixing the stringers and using plywood instead.

Outside, beside the MARTECH catamaran, floats a 24-foot-long Harkers Island-style white skiff. She has varnished wooden ribs and lots of flair in the bow, which gives her a dry ride and that classic Carolina styling. She's fast, too: Mark has clocked her at 40 mph. "(Last year) the school needed to replace a similar boat (used in boat handling and marine sampling classes)," Mark says, "so I built them this one." No plans and only minor lofting. He had an image in his head, shaped from a lifetime of boat building, and just built it. The students who helped got to see a straight transfer: from thought to hand to wood. The process looks a little bit like slow-motion magic, conjuring fantasy and converting it, through hours of careful labor, into something seaworthy.

Learn more at cfcc.edu/martech/boat-building-school

The CFCC Riverfront Boat Show is April 1, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. on the Cape Fear River at Walnut Street.

Grain of Perfection

In a shop that's more like a museum, furniture artist Robert Hause brings old treasures back to life

By Mark Holmberg
Photograph by Andrew Sherman

Robert Hause has been surfing the shimmering waves of Wrightsville Beach since he was a kid. But it's the shimmering rays of oak grain and the mysteries of fine woodworking that truly consume him.

"See the way they radiate?" he says, caressing a fully dressed plank of quarter-sawn oak in his Wrightsville Avenue shop — museum is more like it — filled with original fine furniture from the Arts and Crafts era (1895–1920) as well as the precise reproductions for which he is famed.

This 59-year-old woodworker is absolutely infatuated. He knows every drawing, photo and word in the historic catalogs that litter his place. He knows the serial numbers, dimensions, the quirks and flaws and most important the makers' secrets of the legendary desks, chairs, dressers, tables, hutches, hall trees from masters such as Gustav Stickley, Rennie McIntosh and Charles Rohlfs.

His Dutch/German shepherd companion is named after the legendary Arts and Crafts metalsmith Dirk Van Erp.

Hause can't trace how or why his fascination started. It's almost as if it was written on his soul at birth. As a youngster, "instead of studying books I was pulling out drawers and looking at dovetails," he says.

The Hoggard graduate would go on to earn a geology degree at UNCW and work a 20-year operations career at the Brunswick nuclear power plant. But woodworking was ever his passion, he said. "I've always had a shop."

His current space is a bit more cramped. "It's a small shop," he says, "a one-man, one-dog show."

But what a show. There's a small fortune in precision saws, sanders, drills, routers and hand tools that fill his sawdusted shop. The house in front testifies to his relentless search around the world to find the best, trickiest and rarest examples from the Arts and Crafts era and then repair or refresh them or build copies practically indistinguishable from the originals. It's a perfect match.

Antiques Roadshow would likely love to have his encyclopedic knowledge. But his understanding is more intimate. He has taken these pieces apart, seen exactly how they were made, how they evolved to address weak points, probably even what the makers were thinking as they designed them.

It is a never-ending quest for perfection.

Smell his cocktail of vinegar and steel wool that darkens his creations that need it. There's his clear tent for aging his furniture with ammonia fumes. "I have my own recipe for shellac," he says.

But don't get the idea that he's just an imitator whose pieces sell around the country. Hause just finished a fabulously elaborate original grand hutch that took nearly six months of full-time attention. But it's not really work, he says, "It's just the love of it."

Learn more at www.artofthecraft.com

Space for Innovation

Elite Innovations is a firm designed to help

By Christine Hennessey • Photograph by Mark Steelman

Thomas Edison said, "To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk." While the team at Elite Innovations, a product development company, wouldn't describe their 3D printers, CAD software and industrial designers as "a pile of junk," they nevertheless embrace this spirit.

Founded in 2013 as a Makerspace, Andrew Williams and Ed Hall provided a large workshop for Wilmington's inventors to turn their ideas into physical products, such as TailGator, an innovative truck bed extender, affordable dentures that can be fitted at home, and ORIGOConnect, a "distraction management system" that works with a driver's smartphone while his or her vehicle is in motion and sends important information to a monitor.

As Elite Innovations helped people design and build, they soon realized their clients needed more assistance in the development stage — more imagination, less "junk," if you will. And so, like all good inventors, they adapted.

They hired an industrial designer, a sales rep and two programmers. They also started a robust internship program, taking on talented students from UNCW, Cape Fear Community College, NC State, and Virginia Tech. With the new team in place, they were ready to work — in a downtown office, not a warehouse.

Williams says in a perfect world, clients come to Elite Innovations when they're still at the starry-eyed idea stage. This makes it easier to guide a project, enhancing and adjusting their clients' vision with the market in mind. (But if a product already exists, the team still seeks to find ways to add value or innovate.) They go through multiple iterations to ensure the final design is as close to perfect as possible, then focus groups allow them to zero in on blind spots.

Once the design is finalized, then comes the making; the team builds prototypes, helps source manufacturing resources and marketing opportunities. By the end of the process, the inventor has something better than a brilliant idea. He or she has a product.

Learn more at eliteinnovationsllc.com

Ode in a Grecian Urn

At the Cameron Art Museum's inaugural "Art of the Bloom" event, the glory of the garden is brought to canvas

By Isabel Zermani

Photographs by Mark Steelman

An Ekphrastic poem describes a work of art and in that vivid telling, reveals and amplifies its soul. Art begetting art. From the Greek word "Ekphrasis" meaning "description," this tradition was born ages ago, but who would've ever thought to describe in flowers?

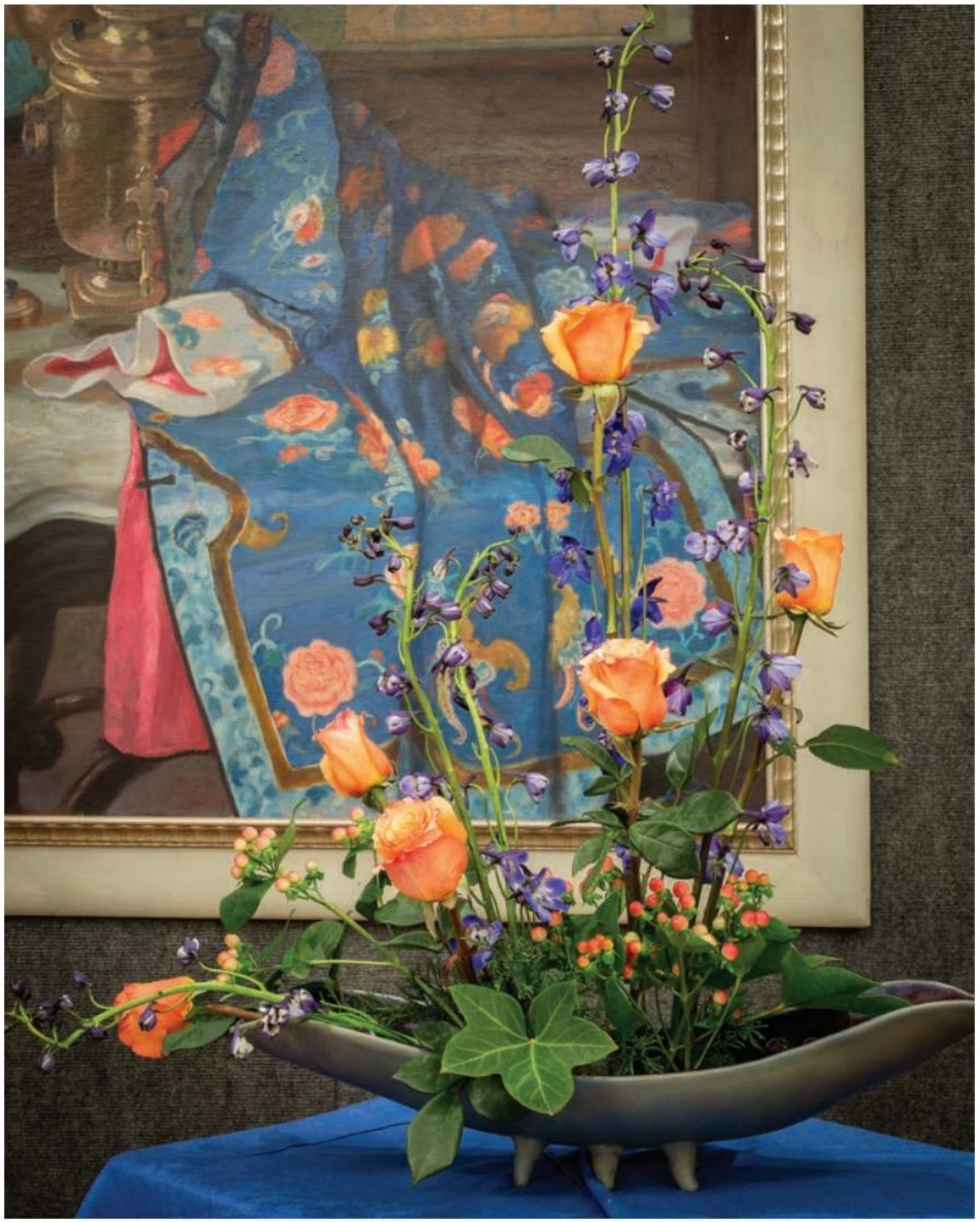
The newly minted New Hanover Garden Club (NHGC) recently teamed up with the Cameron Art Museum to host the first annual "Art of the Bloom" mini-festival at the Blockade Runner. Floral designers interpreted works of art (paintings, lithographs, sculptures) chosen by blind draw from the Cameron's vault for a competition. A group of "Designing Divas," nationally accredited garden club judges from Florida, assessed the entries.

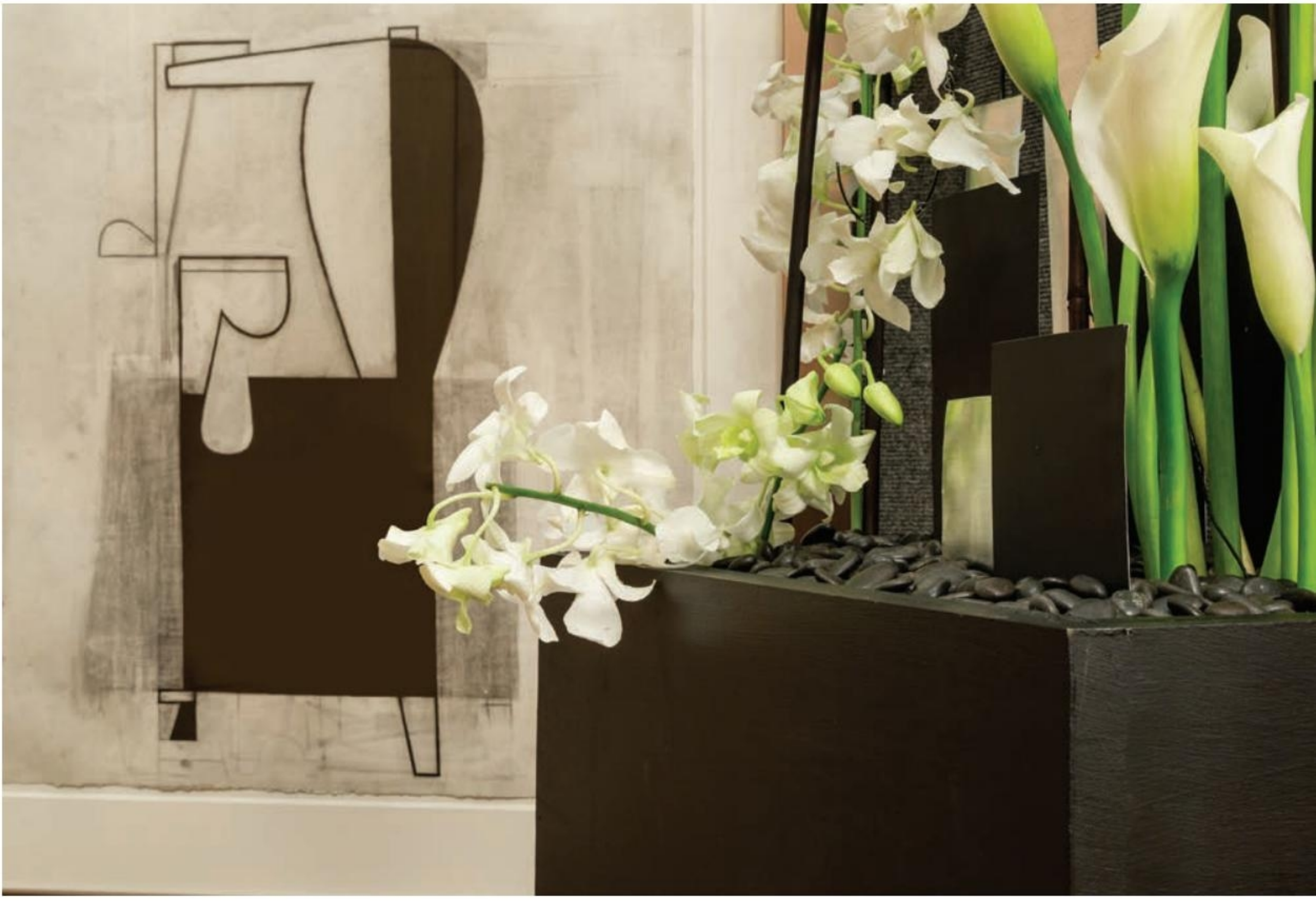
This inaugural event was modeled after the annual "Art in Bloom" at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, begun in 1976. Ten years ago, the North Carolina Museum of Art began a similar annual program. This year, the "Art of the Bloom" hosts felt it was time to launch their own event closer to home, recruiting more than 20 southeastern North Carolina garden clubs and newcomers alike to participate.

Marge Comer of the Coastal Garden Club in Ocean Isle Beach interpreted Wilmington treasure Elisabeth Chant's "Ancient Ko Su Coat," an oil on canvas still life with a coat from the Ming dynasty. Comer created an Ikebana-inspired design with peach roses mimicking the effortless drape of Chant's fabric.

Sharon Van Teyens of the NHGC, a first timer to this sport, won first place for her design of David Storey's "Untitled," an abstract charcoal on paper, a gift from former Wilmington resident, the actress Linda Lavin.

Will Henry Stevens





Van Teyens explored the tension of the piece by juxtaposing the curve of calla lilies to linear bamboo and metallic rectangles.

Another newcomer, Brittney Wells of Verazzls Florist and Events in Wilmington, received the "Best in Show" award for her interpretation of North Carolina artist Romare Bearden's lithograph "The Conversation." Inspired not only by the African patterns on the figure's clothing, Wells was moved by the subject, the African-American struggle for freedom, and designed her arrangement with tightly wrapped willow branches opening up to birds of paradise to symbolize that journey.

A sculpture in its own right, Patti Jacaruso and Kathy Gresham of the Harbor Island Garden Club of Wrightsville Beach used a piece of driftwood and metallic orb to support a trailing orchid to interpret the textures in Will Henry Stevens' "Untitled" abstract oil on canvas.

Local painter Dick Roberts deviated — just slightly — from abstraction in his oil on canvas "Passing Through" with a black chicken emerging in the paint. Barb Bittler of NHGC combined a color-coordinated flower arrangement with a chicken sculpture, equally as tongue-in-cheek.

Not every arrangement arrived in a vase. Ricky Kornegay of Mount Olive recreated "Untitled (head of a woman)," an expressive portrait by Steffen Thomas, in a giant mask of mums, carnations and black miscanthus grass mimicking the artist's dark dividing lines.

Isabel Zermani, our senior editor, prefers the storied life and the bearded iris.

The State of Metalsmiths

Wilmington is home to some of North Carolina's most acclaimed metal crafts people – a tradition that now spans the state

By Emily Colin

North Carolina is known for its deep-rooted "maker" tradition, where crafting has risen from a traditional way of life to a finely honed art form. This is certainly true of metalsmithing, a field where an incredible community of designers has emerged over the past century – all dedicated to creating original, inspired personal adornment. The art has evolved, even as the tools of the trade – torches, hammers, pliers, anvils, files and roll mills – remain constant.

"One of the reasons that there's such a rich tradition in the western part of the state is the craft movement that took place in the early 1900s," says Melissa Manley, Wilmington metalsmith and Cape Fear Community College professor. Driven by economic initiatives, schools like "Arrowmont in Tennessee and Penland in the (N.C.) Blue Ridge supported local people by educating children and giving trades to adults, like jewelry making," explains Manley. Penland School of Crafts (est. 1929) – northwest of Asheville – was at the epicenter. "(Students) wanted to learn from the finest people in the field, and (Penland) kept those fires stoked."

Penland still thrives today, offering multidisciplinary workshops led by a rotating faculty. Asheville metalsmith Joanna Gollberg took her first-ever class at Penland, which "really changed the course of my life." She is now an instructor there. "It's a small community and everyone's making something. Everyone's supportive, and it's a beautiful environment in terms of learning and sharing." Though an anchor for the state's tradition, Penland doesn't offer a degree program.

North Carolina's eastern stronghold, East Carolina University's School of Art and Design, was forged in 1962, bringing the state's tradition to the coast and refining it. ECU offers both B.F.A. and M.F.A. programs. Celebrated instructors and internationally acclaimed artists Linda Darty and Robert Ebendorf helped shape an entire generation of metalsmiths, many of whom settled south in Wilmington post graduation. Ebendorf has retired, but Darty founded and directs ECU's study abroad intensive in Certaldo, Italy.

Another ECU professor, the late John Satterfield, played a seminal role in teaching several of the metalsmiths featured in this piece, such as Wilmington's Will Olney. "He intrigued me," says Olney. "He had technical knowledge about everything. The way he constructed pieces, with mechanical, moving parts – it was steampunk before steampunk was cool."

Goldsmith and designer Mary Ann Scherr's role in shaping the metalsmithing scene – not just in North Carolina but in the field as a whole – cannot be overstated. Scherr passed away just last year, but lived in Raleigh and was a highly sought-after instructor, teaching at Penland, Raleigh Fine Arts and many others. A treasure beyond the Triangle, her work has been displayed in the Vatican Museum of Contemporary Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Smithsonian.

Raleigh metalsmith Sarah Tector served as one of Scherr's studio assistants and later helped to found a Triangle metalsmithing group in her honor. "It was just such a gift to know her. She was an inspiration as a woman and as a creative person," says Tector. "And it wasn't just metals. She was the first female designer at Ford Motor Company, she did extensive work in commercials and graphics, she designed clothing – some of her cookie jars wound up being things Andy Warhol loved. To be doing this, as a female, in times when it was such a struggle to get recognition was amazing."

This small but formidable group of instructors blazed the trail for the thriving and diverse community of metalsmiths that calls our state home today. From seasoned metalsmiths to emerging artisans, gallery owners to college professors, here is a glimpse into the world of North Carolina's metalsmiths – from our backyard to the hills.

Melissa Manley, Wilmington

melissamanleystudios.blogspot.com

Author of *Jewelry Lab: 52 Experiments, Investigations and Explorations in Metal*

Melissa Manley hails from ECU. She earned her M.F.A. in metal design and studied under Bob Ebendorf. "He influenced a generation," she says. "He was one of five people that started the studio metalsmith movement in the U.S. . . . He was one of the first people to take junk and make jewelry out of it.

"I've always been obsessed with personal adornment and collected jewelry," says Manley, who was inspired to expand her artistic repertoire to metalsmithing at the suggestion of local pottery instructor Hiroshi Sueyoshi and fellow artist Michael Van Hout. One class at Tennessee's Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts – and she was hooked.

"I'm just kind of a frustrated anthropologist or archaeologist. Pattern plays a big role in what I do, and rich surface designs just make me drool," Manley says. "I want my work to look like contemporary artifacts of unknown origin."

She believes purchasing a piece of jewelry in person forges a bond between artist and client. "Jewelry is so intimate, that's why it's so interesting. We're obsessed with expressing ourselves, finding ourselves, obsessing again . . . I think it's a beautiful thing."

Will Olney, Wilmington

olneyoriginals.com

Will Olney travels the art festival circuit, selling work at 30 festivals per year. North Carolina festivals may include Cary Spring Daze in Bond Park, Raleigh's Artsplosure, Blowing Rock Art in the Park and Biltmore Village Art Show.

"The lifestyle is the most appealing thing," says Olney, who specializes in a technique called cloisonné enameling. "With the art festival circuit, you get to meet so many different people from different communities and backgrounds. It's a good way to get a concentrated customer base."

Olney's interest in metalsmithing has its roots in his childhood. His grandfather was a ship fitter, and his father inherited a huge metal toolbox, full of oversized tools meant to build and repair World War II vessels. "When I was a kid, before video games or even cable, you did things outdoors and in sheds and garages," Olney says. "And part of my entertainment was this toolbox of metalsmithing paraphernalia."

Olney experimented with his grandfather's tools, melting metal and creating pendants that he gave away to friends. His high school guidance counselor took note and suggested that he take a metalsmithing class at a nearby community college. Years later, undecided on a career, Olney would remember how much he loved this class and go on to earn his B.F.A. in metal design from ECU. Today, the color palette he prefers incorporates blues and greens, inspired by the coastal setting he calls home.

Mitzy Jonkheer, Wilmington

Jonkheer Jewelry & Cicada Metals, 4410 Wrightsville Ave.

Metalsmith Mitzy Jonkheer intended to be an English major. While a freshman at ECU, she wanted to melt down a gold necklace to have a ring made for her mother as a Christmas present. She turned to the phone book. "I thought I was going to a jeweler, but when I got to the shop, I discovered the woman was actually a *metalsmith* . . . I knew that was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life."

Jonkheer studied under both Darty and Satterfield. In 1993, after graduation, she opened the Bauhaus gallery in downtown Wilmington with fellow metalsmith Sarah Tector. Since then, she has run her own studios, sold work to galleries across the state, and taught emerging metalsmiths of all ages, including students at DREAMS of Wilmington, an arts program dedicated to serving youth in need. Her business grew alongside Wilmington's burgeoning movie industry, and over the years her pieces were featured in *One Tree Hill*, *Dawson's Creek*, *The Secret Life of Bees*, and *Safe Haven*.

Today, Jonkheer finds inspiration in poetry, literature and nature. From beautiful turns of phrase inscribed on the back of a poetry cuff to delicately carved bird pendants and the intricate impressions of a cicada wing pressed in silver, Jonkheer's work is, in her own words, "classic, timeless and earthy."

For Jonkheer, the personal connection with her clients is paramount, especially for custom work like wedding rings. "The ring is worn on the finger that goes straight to the heart," she says. Her work often has a heart hidden on the back of it. "I keep up with what's in style, but the things I create come from my head and my heart."

Hsiang-Ting Yen, Raleigh

htyjewelry.com

Hsiang-Ting Yen was an undergraduate business administration student in Taiwan when inspiration struck. "My parents were afraid 'you'll starve yourself if you become an artist.' I studied business, so I'd definitely have a job when I graduated. But I wasn't happy," Yen says. Then, an end-of-semester metalsmithing show at her university transformed her perspective.

Yen went on to attend Savannah College of Art and Design, graduating with an M.A. in metals and jewelry and an M.F.A. in jewelry and objects in 2012. Now living in Raleigh, she participates in the Triangle's monthly get-togethers founded in honor of Mary Ann Scherr.

"Right now, my business's main strengths are custom designs, craft shows and wholesale," Yen says. She loves revealing the end result of a custom design — it's "like a kid opening a candy box."

In a departure from earlier nature-inspired influences, today Yen leans "more toward geometric and sculptural forms. I love Art Deco, the Art Nouveau era — I like how they interpret the design and the color."

Ndidi Kowalczyk, Raleigh

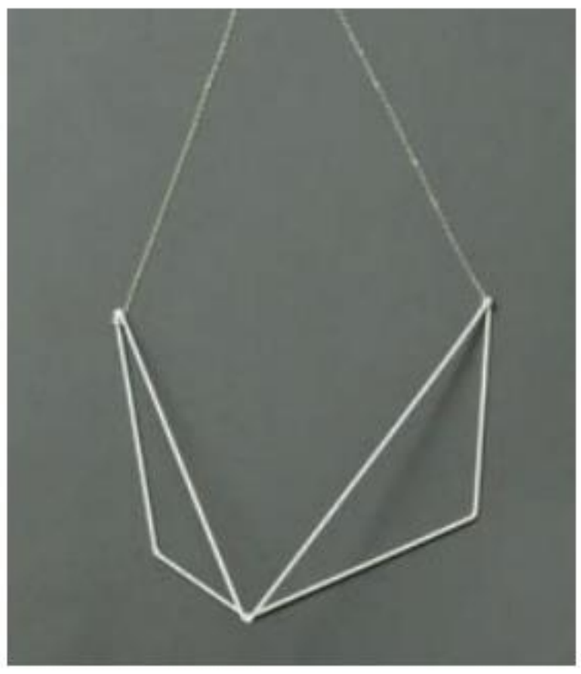
www.hothouseposey.etsy.com

Ndidi Kowalczyk earns her living as a metalsmith, but her formal education wasn't in metalsmithing — it was in textile design. "I marry what I know about textiles, how fabric and colors work, to create really beautiful pieces of art," she says. "I've taken a lot of extension classes with people like Mary Ann Scherr and at the Pullen Arts Center."

The supportive nature of the all-walks-of-life Triangle metalsmithing scene has been instrumental in Kowalczyk's success. "Sometimes you'll feel that if you're in a particular field but haven't learned in proscribed ways, they won't accept you. But the metalsmithing community in the Triangle is very open and welcoming."

Most recently, Kowalczyk has been focused on the technique of enameling. "I love the aspect of being able to paint with powder. The enamel is so varied in what it can do and be."

Today, Kowalczyk's career is a blend of online and in-store sales (locally at Cicada Metals), teaching at The Crafts Center at NC State University, and a growing body of custom work. "I've just started a pendant series where I layer enameled pieces together and build them so that they're more three-dimensional," she says. "They bring me a lot of joy."



Sarah Tector, Raleigh

www.stectormetals.com

Raleigh-based metalsmith Sarah Tector lived and worked in Wilmington for about 15 years, founding a gallery with Jonkheer. "When Mitzy and I were first out of school, it was a hustle and a scramble," says Tector. The two attended ECU together, where Tector graduated with a B.F.A. in art education, concentrating in metal design. At first enrolled in the sculpture program, Tector happened into a metal design class by accident — one that would shape her career.

Tector's livelihood incorporates craft shows, in-store sales, teaching and creating custom pieces.

"All my income comes from being an artist. I love working with clean, geometric and architectural forms — lots of circles, squares, ovals, triangles, playing with negative space. There's a modern, minimalist look. Right now, I'm working with bold red and yellow pieces, mostly out of aluminum sheet metal, scoring, folding and shaping it into a three-dimensional shape."

Joanna Gollberg, Asheville

joannagollberg.com

Joanna Gollberg, a self-described "gemstone addict," has been making jewelry since she was 13 years old. "My grandmother (a former enamellist) used to organize a sale at her church, and she was always in charge of the jewelry," Gollberg says. "She would get donations from people and if there was a bunch of stuff that was unsalvageable, she would take it apart and I'd make it into things." When Gollberg was 19, she inherited all of her grandmother's enameling supplies and signed up for a class at Penland. "I had never spent so much time doing one thing I enjoyed."

Over the course of her career, Gollberg has experimented with many different approaches. After graduating from Warren Wilson College, she enrolled in a technique-based two-year jewelry design program at the Fashion Institute of Technology. Since then, she has published several books on metalsmithing techniques, including *Making Metal Jewelry* (Lark Books), has taught at Penland and elsewhere. "It's immensely meaningful and satisfying for me to share what I know," she says. "I've finally settled into doing what I want to do." Her current line is driven by "gemstones — their colors and shapes," and handcrafting the settings in which they sit.

Emily Colin is the author of The New York Times best-selling novel The Memory Thief *and is former associate director of DREAMS of Wilmington. Her new novel,* The Dream Keeper's Daughter, *debuts this summer from Ballantine Books.*

Where to Learn

Cape Fear Community College, Wilmington.
www.cfcc.edu/hfa/home/art/metals

East Carolina University*, Greenville. www.ecu.edu

Pocosin Arts, Columbia. www.pocosinarts.org

Cary Arts Center, Cary.

Pullen Arts Center, Raleigh.

The Crafts Center at NC State University, Raleigh.
www.crafts.arts.ncsu.edu

Sawtooth School for Visual Art, Winston-Salem. www.sawtooth.org

Haywood Community College*, Clyde. www.haywood.edu

John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown. www.folkschool.org

Penland School of Crafts www.penland.org

*degree program

Where to Shop in Wilmington

Blue Moon Gift Shops
203 Racine Drive, bluemoongiftshops.com

Cameron Art Museum Gift Shop
3201 South 17th St., www.cameronartmuseum.org

Edge of Urge
18 Market St., www.edgeofurge.com

Jonkheer Jewelry & Cicada Metals
4410 Wrightsville Ave., www.facebook.com/JonkheerJewelry

Spectrum Fine Jewelry, 1125 Military Cutoff Road, Suite J
www.spectrumartandjewelry.com

A Tale of Two Farm Families

The rise and rescue of Echo Farm's historic farmhouse

By Isabel Zermani • Photographs by Rick Ricozzi

New owners Scott and Lynn Carpenter stand with Alice and Jack McCarley who lived here as newlyweds, in the house where Jack was raised

When Jack McCarley was born in 1929, his mother Lina stayed two weeks in the James Walker Memorial Hospital. When she recovered, Lina, her husband John D. "Jack" McCarley and their newborn son drove four miles south to the family home just outside the city limits. "We were the first car to drive down Carolina Beach Road after it'd been paved," says Jack, who would spend most of his young life on Echo Dairy Farms, leaving only to return with his newlywed bride, Alice. That first homecoming, on a blacktop road down a long dirt drive to the house, was one he would repeat on the eve of its 100th year. The original farmhouse, newly restored by Scott Carpenter and his family, has been witness to it all: The rise of a family farm expanding to over 1,000 acres; the failure of the dairy business; and the transformation into a golf course community of 1,000 families. Now, Wilmington's rapid development may alter the landscape yet again.

Jack's grandfather, Alexander Oldham McEachern, began the dairy in 1908. He was described by the trade weekly *Hoard's Dairy* in 1913 as "a strong-chinned, blue-eyed Scotchman" who handles his cows "like a wise husbandman, with intelligence and genuine affection." At that time, the 500-acre farm boasted 60 Holstein and Jersey cows, 22 heifers, two bulls, and a barn full of calves. Over time, he would more than double his farm size and triple his livestock. His son John D., then Jack, would run the family business. Many locals remember touring the farm on school trips, getting a chocolate milk and a cow figurine as a keepsake.

Originally called Shadeland Dairy, A.O. renamed the vast woodlands "Echo Dairy Farm" because "late in the afternoon when it was still — no tractors, just horse and buggy — you'd hear 'Gee haw! Gee haw!' echoing," Jack recalls his grandfather's tale. A tall man at 6-foot-1, his granddaddy loved Coca-Cola, his beach shack on Carolina Beach, and "didn't tolerate whisky."

By any account, A.O. was a hard-working dairyman who kept extensive records of milk production and cattle genealogy, working alongside professors at NC State to track and breed. It's said that every cow was named and had more complete family trees than most Wilmingtonians. His most prized cow, Regina, produced milk in record amounts and became a household name.

In 1917, A.O. had the five-bedroom brick farmhouse built by a local carpenter for his wife Minnie and his three daughters. Each of the 44 windows was built slightly different from the others, Jack recalls, something Scott would discover when he had them replaced. The attic window that once oversaw the alfalfa fields still offers a peaceful lookout spot. Small differentiations in the grass reveal where the original driveway was. Now the house is approached from the back. Jack remembers boyhood hours spent gazing out from this spot and still it holds a special power.

At one point you might have seen the log cabin Jack's parents built or, later, the house Jack and Alice built and raised their boys in. You'd have seen fields where Jack, at age 10, learned to drive a tractor, or woods where his sons roamed — "they always brought a dog," assures Alice — or Barnard's Creek where Jack kept his fishing boat. And you'd have seen farmhands. Echo Dairy Farms employed upwards of 50 people to tend crops, milk cows, and run bottle delivery. Jack remembers workers from Brunswick Town paddling homemade boats

The house in 1955 with Jack's mother's baby blue Chrysler in the driveway

across the Cape Fear River and walking through the forest each day to work. "I can't accurately describe how poor people were in those days," says Jack.

They say the heart of a house is the kitchen, but in McEachern's day, it was the dining room. Jack says salesmen from all over would conveniently try to visit the farm around lunchtime. Beck, the cook, lived on the property and Minnie, A.O's wife, supervised lunch for up to 14 salesmen around the table. The original floors are in good condition and the old wooden columns — irresistible, Jack remembers, for a boy's climbing — frame the entry from dining to living room.

Just off the kitchen is the basement where one chilly evening A.O. let his brother W. H. McEachern keep his monkeys. Not the famed monkeys of the nearby junction, these came over on banana boats and lived in W.H.'s downtown produce warehouse. A.O. forgot to tell Beck, who went into the basement the next morning and, according to Jack, "jumped out of her shoes!"

Glass doors divide the living room from what is now the front hall, what Jack calls "the music room." His mother kept a pump organ in the room and, after much dismay, convinced her husband to have it repainted her color of choice: pink. "My mother was a catbird," remembers Jack. To get a good seal Carpenter had to replace the door but refashioned the original front door into a hall tree and bench that holds court in this cozy entryway.

The former screened porch has been rebuilt into a sunroom with cool stone tile and a sunny palate. This is where Scott and his wife Lynn — the first girl he ever kissed — like to relax with a cup of coffee. It's just off their bedroom, the former office, with a custom, reclaimed wood headboard in a "Restoration Hardware" style Scott wired with reading lights.

Up the staircase are the other bedrooms and what used to be the only bathroom in the house. Each of Scott and Lynn's children, grown and working on families of their own, chose the color and style of their rooms. Two nautical-themed rooms connect through what was once a closet. One of them, Jack's childhood room, now belongs to Scott's grandchild. Spying a framed photo

Jack McCarley with his sons and their friends on the farm in 1955

Early photograph shows the dirt driveway and a pen of Holstein cows

An intimidating fixer-upper, next-door neighbor William Zwick says most people who came to look at the house didn't even get out of their cars.

of this grandchild wearing only overalls next to a white calf, Jack laughs, "this could be me." Scott bought this house to bring his family together. His son, a UNCW grad, lives here full time, while Scott and Lynn come down frequently from their other farmhouse just outside Charlotte in Louis, N.C. You can take the family off the farm, but not the farm out of the family.

Preserving the character and legacy of the house while updating it for longevity helps to explain why the exterior is newly painted white. Repairs to the brick over the years had created a patchwork effect. Scott opted for a special white sealer that "locks on to seal the bricks," he says. Framing the windows with black shutters updates the look, as does "170 feet of copper flashing" he got from a buddy in Kinston who "refused payment," Scott tells me with a twinkle of disbelief in his eye. Scott's restoration story is filled with moments like this, people coming to his aid, supplies discounted or donated, fitting furniture found for a song. "Crazy providential stories," says Scott. Sometimes a project is unarguably blessed.

Which is exactly how the next-door neighbor William Zwick feels about the Carpenter family moving in. Though a monument to a beloved time, the house had fallen into disrepair. Brush and vines consumed the yard and Scott built a fire pit to patiently burn it off one campfire at a time. An intimidating fixer-upper, Zwick says most people who came to look at the house didn't even get out of their cars. Once a prominent fixture, it had mercilessly deteriorated into near ruin. The pain of change is something no one knows better than Jack.

As he tells it, by 1972 the property became more valuable than the dairy. The taxes were steep.

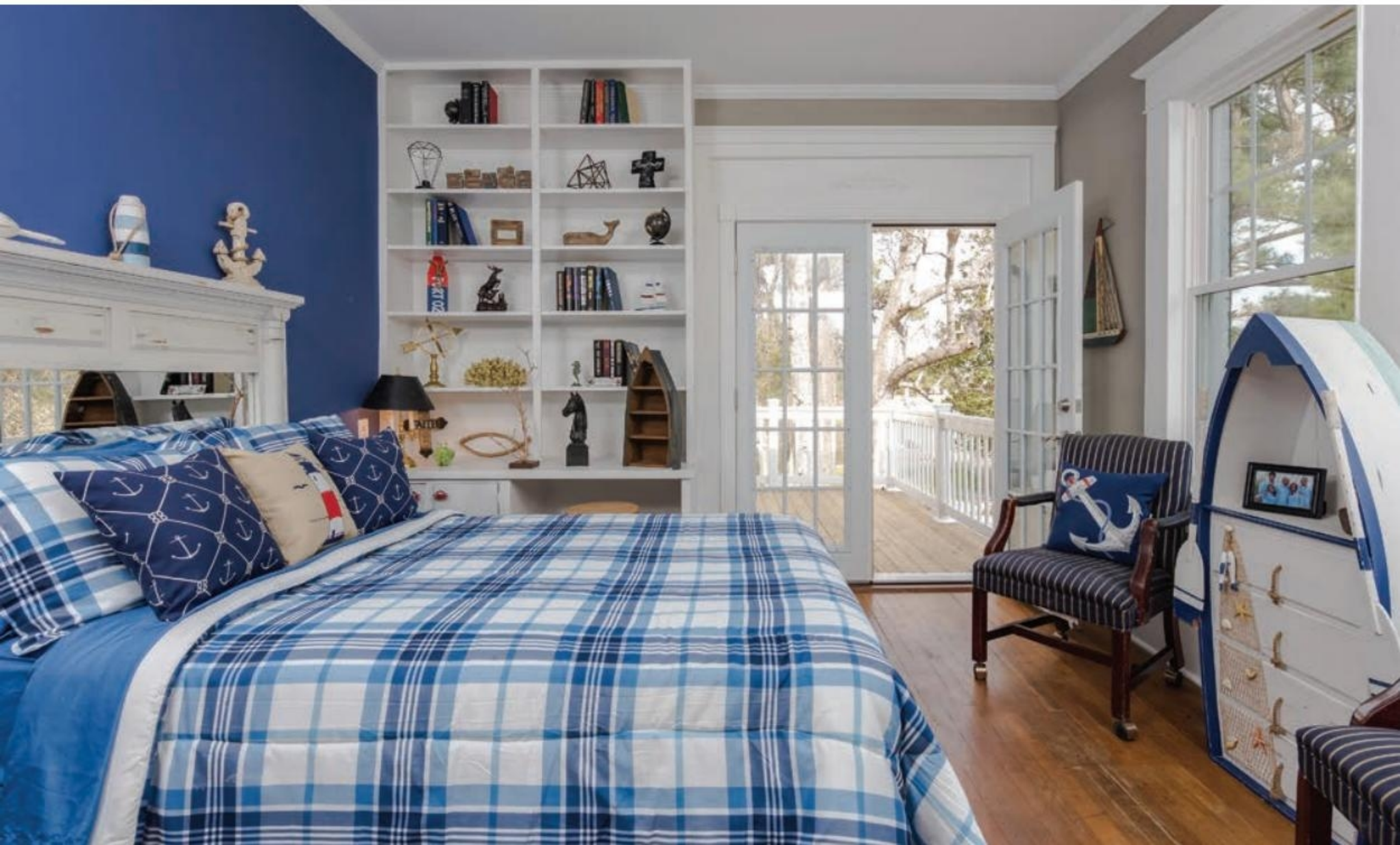
The city was growing ever closer. They even searched for property in the surrounding counties to relocate, but the dairy industry was facing pressure. "They were starting to say milk isn't good for you," says Jack. They decided operating was no longer feasible. Echo Dairy Farms closed. A.O. had passed on some years before, but Jack and his father, who'd also put their life's work into the dairy, had to watch it close. "It would've been nice to see it go on forever," says Jack.

An auction was held for all the livestock. Jack recalls one man bought eight or 10 cows and couldn't fit them all on his truck, so they left one to pick up the next day. That night there was only one cow on Echo Dairy Farms. At 3 a.m. a knock came at the door and Jack answered to find a couple. "We hit one of your cows," they said. After helping the couple with the mangled car, Jack went out to find the distressed cow struggling off with broken legs in search of her herd. He put her to rest.

In 1974, Echo Farms Golf and Country Club opened on the 140-acre tract. The original milking barn was converted into a clubhouse, torn down now, and single-family homes were added. The 18th green was built on the farmhouse property on a handshake agreement, one the Carpenters inherited. Now residents of Echo Farms are facing a similar dilemma — the land is more valuable than the golf course.

Matrix Development Corp., the New Jersey corporation that owns and operates the golf course, plans to develop the land for housing. Staunch resident opposition and pending legal challenges are among the hurdles. The Echo Farms Residents Association has taken legal action against Matrix, arguing the proposed development violates restrictive covenants. But Matrix is moving forward.

you & me



Jack and Alice returned to the house for the first time since the farm sold.

Recently, the technical aspects of their plans for a 216-unit apartment complex, 164 single-family homes and 31 townhomes dubbed "The Woodlands at Echo Farms" were approved by the city's subdivision review board.

Jack remembers hunting geese on these woodlands.

Many residents at a recent "Save Echo Farms" meeting in the Roland-Grise Auditorium described concerns besides property values: loss of green space, dangerous traffic and school overcrowding. They expressed how blindsided they felt. Like an echo across the decades, they didn't expect their way of life to change.

Whether or not Echo Farms can be "saved" hangs in the balance, but the farmhouse, at least, is restored. Jack and Alice returned to the house for the first time since the farm sold.

They found the camellia garden Jack's mother planted revived by the Carpenters. The Stuart pecan trees Jack's father bought as seedlings on the train now tower over the house. Lynn shows Jack to a tiny footprint in the concrete walkway inscribed *1931*, "I'm about to die to ask — is that your footprint?"

"Yes," says Jack who, tall and bright-eyed like his grandfather, admits to being a bit overwhelmed by the memories.

Scott takes him by the arm and gives him a reassuring pat on the back as they walk toward the door, "You're home, Jack."

Isabel Zermani, our senior editor, prefers the storied life.

ALMANAC

March

By Ash Alder

It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade.

–Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

Worms on the March

March is here and the world begins to soften. Some six feet underground, the earthworms are thawing, and when their first castings reappear in the dormant garden, so, too, will the robin. You'll hear his mirthful, rhythmic song on an otherwise ordinary morning, pastel light filtering through the kitchen window where the sleeping cat stretches out his toes and, slowly, unfurls.

Cheerily, cheer-up, cheer-up, cheerily, cheer-up.

In other words: Spring has arrived.

All at once you notice flowering crocus, catkins dangling from delicate branches, colorful weeds dotting sepia toned landscapes. You watch the robin trot across the lawn, chest puffed like a popinjay as he pinballs from worm to fat, delicious worm. Soon he will gather twigs, feathers and grasses to build his nest.

Cheerily, cheer-up, cheer-up, cheerily, cheer-up.

As the kettle whistles from the stovetop, the aroma of freshly ground coffee warming the sunny room, a smile animates your face with soft lines.

Spring has arrived, you think.

And the world stirs back to life.

The Goddess Returns

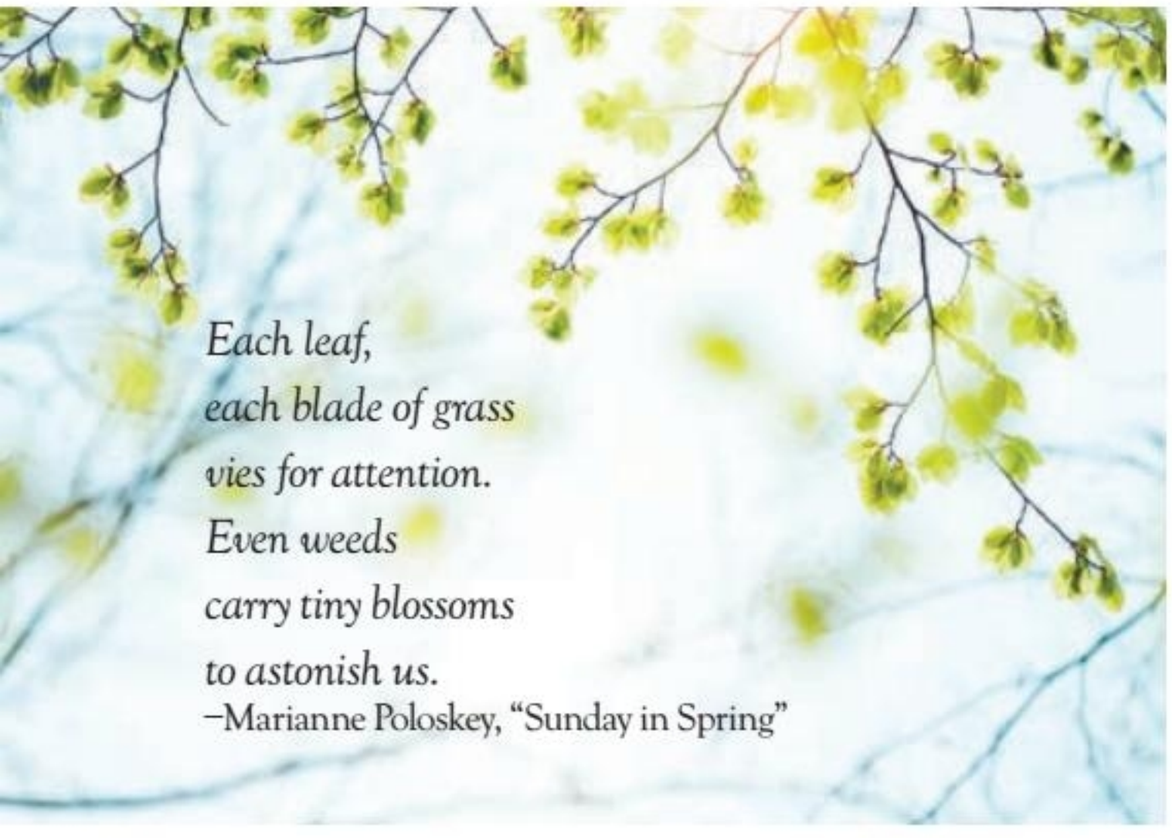
The Full Worm Moon and Daylight Saving Time both happen on Sunday, March 12. Because maple sap begins to flow in March, Native Americans deemed this month's full moon the Sap Moon. You won't want to miss it. And while you may miss that hour of sleep after turning the clocks forward, the longer days will make up for it in no time – especially when the field crickets start sweet-talking you into porch-sitting past supper.

Although the lusty robin may have announced the arrival of spring weeks ago, Monday, March 20, officially marks the vernal equinox. Greek myth tells that Demeter, goddess of harvest and fertility, celebrates the six-month return of her beautiful daughter, Persephone (goddess of the Underworld), by making the earth lush and fruitful once again.

International Day of Forests and World Poetry Day fall on Tuesday, March 21 – a day after the start of spring. Celebrate with a poem by your favorite naturalist, and if you're feeling inspired, try reading a few lines to a favorite stand of oak, maple or pine.

In the spirit of Saint Patrick's Day (Friday, March 17), why not spread white or red clover seed across bare patches of the lawn? One benefit of this flowering, drought-resistant legume is that it attracts pollinators and other insects that prey on garden pests. Plus, if you find a four-leaf clover – supposedly there's one for every 10 thousand with three leaves – it's said to bring you good luck. Give the shamrock to a friend and your fortune will double.

According to *National Geographic*, one of the "Top 7 Must-See Sky Events for 2017" will occur on March 29. On this Wednesday evening, Mercury, Mars, and a thin crescent moon will form a stunning celestial triangle in the western sky, with Mercury shining at its brightest to the right of the moon and Mars glowing above them.



Bald Facts about Daffodils

The daffodil – also known as jonquil, Narcissus and "Lent Lily" – is the birth flower of March. Synonymous with spring, this cheerful yellow flower is a symbol of rebirth and good fortune. And a little-known fact: Medieval Arabs used daffodil juice as a cure for baldness.

Arts Calendar

Jazz at the CAM

3/2

Fat Bike Championship

3/11

Brandford Marsalis Quartet

3/14

3/1 Snake & Turtle Feeding
4–4:30 p.m. Enjoy a brief presentation about the live animals on display in the Events Center and then watch them being fed. Admission: $1. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

3/1–5 Live Theatre
8 p.m. Opera House Theatre Company presents *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. Based on the 1994 cult film of the same name, the show tells the story of Tick, Bernadette and Adam as they board a bus named Priscilla and take their wacky drag show into the Australian Outback. Admission: $27–32. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.operahousetheatrecompany.net.

3/2 Southport Bluebird Workshop
9–10 a.m. Learn about the area's most vibrant songbirds, their habitat and food preferences, how to attract them to your yard, and how to encourage them to nest and re-nest with you. Admission: Free. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Southport. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

3/2 Jazz at the CAM
6:30–8 p.m. Jazz at the CAM presents The Batuque Trio live. Admission: $10–12. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

3/2 Coastal Consumer Showcase
4–7 p.m. Explore an array of products and services in the Southport-Oak Island area. Features food samples, seminars, giveaways, cash drawing, Chinese auction and more. St. James Community Center, 4136 Southport-Supply Road, St. James. Info: (910) 457-6964 or www.southport-oakisland.com.

3/3–5 Youth Theatre
7:30 p.m. (Friday & Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Thalian Association Children's Theatre presents *Really Rosie*, the story of a smart aleck kid on Brooklyn's Avenue P acting out show biz fantasies and directing and starring in an Oscar-winning movie. Admission: $12. Hannah Block 2nd Street Stage, 120 South Second Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1788 or www.thalianhall.org.

3/4 Cardinal Strut
8:30 a.m. 10K, 5K, fun run and cardinal dash. Post-race party includes breakfast from Waffle House, music, awards and bounce house. Admission: $15–35. Proceeds benefit Holly Tree PTA. Holly Tree Elementary School, 3020 Web Trace, Wilmington. Info: (910) 512-0927 or www.cardinalstrut.com.

3/4 Hobby Greenhouse Tour
9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Self-guided tour of local greenhouses through New Hanover, Brunswick and Pender counties. Admission: Free. NHC Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.hobbygreenhouseclub.org.

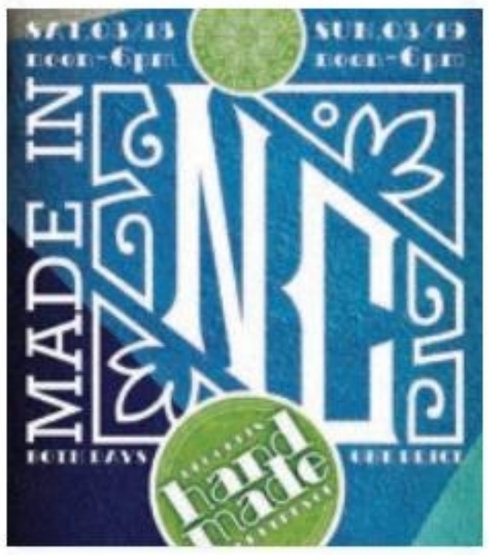
3/4 Wildlife Program & Plant Sale
9:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Program about native trees and plants of southeastern North Carolina and how they benefit local birds and wildlife presented by Cape Fear Audubon Society President Charley Winterbauer. Learn how to create a native habitat for local birds, butterflies and bees, and pick up plants at the Native Plant Sale. Admission: Free. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

3/4 Back Yard BBQ Cook-Off
10 a.m. Annual BBQ competition featuring more than thirty contestants, a double-blind judging, tastings, beer tent, raffles, food, arts and crafts vendors, and live music. Admission: Proceeds benefit Step Up for Soldiers. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 232-5554 or www.stepupforsoldiers.org/bbq.

3/4 Battleship Program
12–4:30 p.m. Fire Control: The Brains Behind the Guns. A chance to learn about the various types of fire control equipment on the ship and how main and secondary battery plotting rooms, fire control tower, gun turrets, fire control directors and the combat information center operated to fight fires effectively. Admission: $45–50. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

3/4 Cape Fear Beer Fest
12–5 p.m. Unlimited tasting of more than 100 craft and international beers, wines and ciders from some of the finest brewmasters in the world. Admission: $35–50. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5101 or www.capefearbeerfest.com.

3/4 Family Field Day
2:30–5:30 p.m. Coastal Land Trust presents a Family Field Day featuring an Oyster Roast and Low Country Boil, plus live music by Masonboro Sound. Admission: $55. Five Eagles Partners Farm, 4000 Mooretown Road, Rocky Point. Info: (910) 790-4524 or coastallandtrust.org.



Made in NC

3/18-19

Stomp

3/22

Wrightsville Beach Marathon

3/24-25

3/4 Scholarship Pageant
7:30 p.m. High school juniors from New Hanover County compete during this annual scholarship pageant based on a private interview with judges, evening gown competition and on-stage presentation. The winner is the recipient of the Beverly Anne Jurgessen Scholarship Award. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: www.ncazaleafestival.org/events/scholarship-pageant.

3/4 & 18 Story Hour
11 a.m. – 12 p.m. Miss Shannon leads an interactive event for kids ages 3 to 6. The morning opens with a picture book and ends with a project or activity, and includes time to play, learn and laugh. Each child should bring a participating adult. Admission: Free. Main Library, 201 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6303 or www.nhclibrary.org.

3/6 National Theatre
1–5 p.m. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute features *Saint Joan*, Bernard Shaw's iconic play about Joan of Arc and her bloody mission to drive the English from France. Admission: $6–20. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.uncw.edu/olli/nationaltheatre.html.

3/7 Bird Hike
9–10:30 a.m. Join park staff for a leisurely bird watching stroll. Search for migrants, winter residents and year-round bird species. Admission: Free. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

3/7 Power of the Purse
6 p.m. Silent auction and raffle with a varied collection of purses and accessories donated by local boutiques, retailers and designers. Proceeds benefit Wilmington Health Access for Teens. Country Club of Landfall, 800 Sunrunner Place, Wilmington. Info: (910) 202-4605 or whatswhat.org.

3/7 The Habana Boys Live
7:30 p.m. From Cuba, the Habana Boys are made up of four classically trained tenors with an accompanying band. The group's repertoire ranges from classic Broadway tunes and Italian love songs to 1950s pop, Latin hits and opera. Admission: $22–40. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

3/8 Airlie Bird Walk
8–9:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden staff and Airlie environmental educators for a relaxed bird walk around Airlie Gardens. Admission: $3–9. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

3/9–12 Service Leadership Yoga
9 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Thursday–Sunday). Yoga workshop for PTSD and special populations. Explore the process of leadership development through self-inquiry and transformation, so as to become effective community leaders and outreach facilitators. Admission: $550–600. Wilmington Yoga Center, 5329 Oleander Drive, Suite 200, Wilmington. Info: (910) 350-0234 or wilmingtonyogacenter.com.

3/9–26 Live Theatre
7:30 p.m. (Thursday – Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Thalian Association presents *Barefoot in the Park*, a classic rom-com about cautious a young lawyer and his free-spirited newlywed bride. The play follows the couple from the joy of the honeymoon to the reality of married life. Admission: $25. Red Barn Studio Theatre, 1122 South Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 254-1788 or www.thalianhall.org.

3/10 Newcomer's Meeting
9:30 a.m. North Brunswick Newcomer's Club will host a meet-and-greet with snacks and refreshments followed by a meeting at 10 a.m. Gary Vidmar from the Town of Leland will speak. The feature presentation will cover native plants in coastal landscapes. Admission: Membership is $25. Leland Cultural Arts Center, 1212 Magnolia Village Way, Leland. Info: nbnewcomers.org.

3/10 Live Music
7:30 p.m. The Guest Artist Series at St. Paul's Episcopal Church features American organist Christopher Houlihan. Admission: $15. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 16 North 16th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-4578 or www.spechurch.org.

3/10 & 11 Resolve Women's Retreat
6–9:30 p.m. (Friday); 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Saturday). Women's conference/retreat devoted to investing in the spiritual lives of women from all walks of life. Weekend features teaching, praise and fellowship in an oceanfront hotel and includes food. Speakers include Annie Meadows of Las Vegas, Carol Wolaver of Nashville and Tammy Ritter of Wilmington. Admission: $50–60. Courtyard by Marriott, 100 Charlotte Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-2030 or calvaryofwilmington.org/resolve.

3/11 Bluebird Workshop
9:15–10:30 a.m. Learn about the area's most vibrant songbirds, their habitat and food preferences, how to attract

them to your yard, and how to encourage them to nest and re-nest with you. Admission: Free. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

3/11 — Cape Fear ComicCon

10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Cape Fear ComicCon features comic and related vendors, cosplay participants, gaming area, panels of experts on comics, superheroes, and monsters, food vendors and screenings of classic B horror films. Coastline Convention & Event Center, 501 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (843) 655-8775 or capefearcomiccon.com.

3/11 — St. Patrick's Day Festival

11 a.m. – 12 p.m. (Parade); 12–6 p.m. (Festival). Family-friendly St. Patrick's Day celebration featuring a parade, live music, dancing and vendors with cultural items, food and beer available for purchase. Admission: Free. North Front Street & North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: wilmingtonstpatricksdayfestival.com.

3/11 — Fat Bike Championship

12 p.m. Fat tire mountain bike race held on an all-sand course along the shores of Wrightsville Beach. Includes an 8-mile, 16-mile and 24-mile beach race. Admission: $65–95. A portion of the proceeds benefit the Wrightsville Beach Foundation. Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Boulevard, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7105 or www.fatcross.com.

3/11 — Battleship Program

12–4:30 p.m. Firepower: The Guns of the Battleship. Learn about the ship's 16-inch and 5-inch guns from the gun houses to the ammunition loading compartments, the 40mm and 20mm guns, and the weapons that they replaced. For ages 16 and up. Admission: $45–50. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

3/11 — Metropolitan Opera

1–4 p.m. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute presents *La Traviata*. Sonya Yoncheva stars as the doomed courtesan Violetta Valery, opposite rising American tenor Michael Fabiano as her lover, Alfredo. San Francisco Opera Music Director Nicola Luisotti conducts. Admission: $20–24. Lumina Theater, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3195 or www.uncw.edu.

3/11 — Roast on the Coast

6–11 p.m. Annual oyster roast/March Madness party hosted by the Junior League of Wilmington, featuring live music by Sonic Spectrum, open bar, silent auction, raffles and coverage of the NCAA basketball games. Admission: $65–75. Hilton Wilmington Riverside, 301 North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 799-7405 or www.jlwnc.org.

3/13 & 14 — Youth Nature Program

10–11 a.m. Bring your little explorers out to the park and discover nature through stories, songs, hands-on activities, hikes and crafts. This week's theme is "Water, Water Everywhere?" Admission: $3. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

3/14 — Brandford Marsalis Quartet

7:30 p.m. The Branford Marsalis Quartet will perform live joined by guest vocalist Kurt Elling. Admission: $25–75. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.uncw.edu/presents/marsalis_elling.html.

3/14 — Over 50s Dance

7:30 p.m. Over 50s dance featuring a mixer, ballroom, social and line dancing with music by DJ Baby Boomer. A short basic level dance lesson will start at 7:30 p.m. followed by open dancing until 10 p.m. Couples and singles are welcome. Admission: $8 plus snack and drink to share. NHC Senior Resource Center, 2222 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 620-8427 or overfiftiesdanceclub.org.

3/14 & 28 — Contra Dance

7:30–9:30 p.m. Join the Cape Fear Contra Dancers for a few hours of energetic, contemporary American country dancing with live music by Box of Chocolates, a band that features fiddle, percussion, guitar, dulcimer, bass, mandolin and more. Admission: $5. Fifth Avenue UMC, 409 South Fifth Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 619-9686 or www.meetup.com/Cape-Fear-Contra-Dancers.

3/15 — Southport Bird Walk

8:30–9:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden staff for a bird walk around Southport's historic district and waterfront. Admission: Free. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Southport. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

3/15 — Youth Program

3–3:45 p.m. Pirates – Shiver Me Timbers! Children's program featuring a costumed pirate. Learn about local pirates: where they lived and traveled, what they did and how to talk "pirate." Light refreshments provided. Admission: Free.

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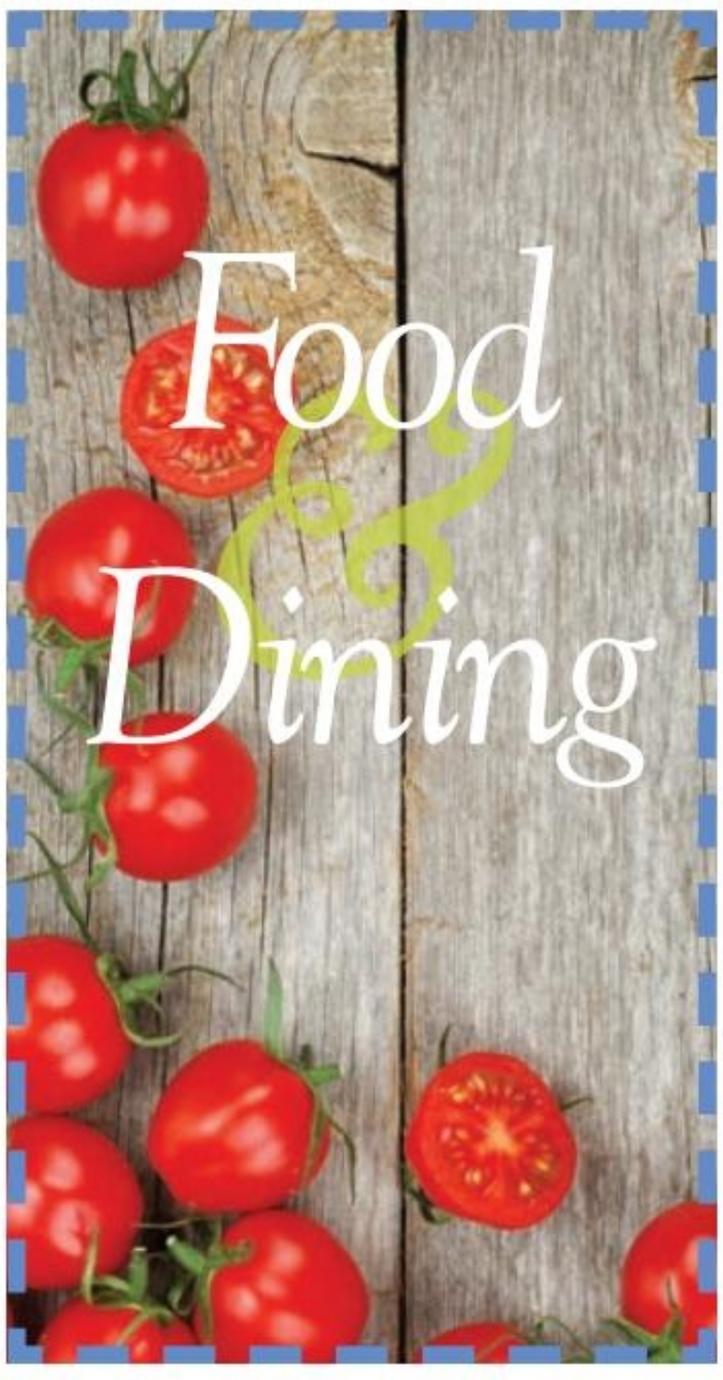

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Dvořák | Violin Concerto
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Open to the public. Visit: wilmingtonart.org for more details.

Wrightsville Beach Museum, 303 West Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-2569 or wbmuseumofhistory.com.

3/16 **Birding Trail Hike**

8 a.m. – 12 p.m. Explore Smith Creek Park along the NC Birding Trail in the coastal plain. Hike is approximately 2 miles, transportation provided from Halyburton Park. Admission: $10. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

3/16 **Lionel Popkin Dance**

7:30 p.m. Lionel Popkin presents Inflatable Trio. Performed on and around an inflatable plastic living room set, the dance looks at ways we attempt to orient ourselves within ever-changing domestic, social and environmental landscapes. Admission: $32. Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or www.lionelpopkin.org.

3/17 **Pink Ribbon Cocktail Party**

7–11 p.m. Cocktail party featuring heavy hors d-oeuvres, open bar, live music, entertainment and guest celebrity Meg Caswell. Meg will speak on breast cancer awareness and her Pink Ribbon connection. Admission: $85. Hilton Wilmington Riverside, 301 North Water, Wilmington. Info: www.nhrmc.org.

3/17 & 18 **Ikebana International Exhibition**

1–5 p.m. (Friday); 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Saturday). The Ikebana International Wilmington Chapter presents their annual exhibition featuring approximately 50 Japanese flower arrangements representing different Ikebana schools, art in bloom interpretations and freestyle. A flower demo on Saturday at 1 p.m. and small miniature arrangements will be for sale. The Cape Fear Bonsai Society is the guest exhibitor. Admission: Free. NHC Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.ikebanawilmington.com.

3/17–19 **Seaglass Salvage Market**

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Friday); 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday). Once a month indoor/outdoor market filled with up-cycled, recycled and repurposed furniture and home décor items, salvage pieces perfect for DIY projects, yard and garden décor, jewelry and local honey. Admission: Free. 1987 Andrew Jackson Highway (Hwy 74/76), Leland. Info: www.seaglasssalvagemarket.com.

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3/18 **St. Patrick's Lo Tide Run**

8 a.m. 10K/5K held in honor of Steve Haydu featuring an after-party, raffle, silent auction and awards. Admission: $30–40. Proceeds are donated to families fighting cancer who are in financial crisis. Carolina Beach Boardwalk, Carolina Beach Avenue South, Carolina Beach. Info: www.lotiderun.org.

3/18 **Native Plant Sale**

10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Local growers from Going Native will have a variety of native plants for sale out on the sidewalk. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

3/18 **Wrightsville Beach Biathlon**

10:30 a.m. A unique race held on Wrightsville Beach featuring 8 miles surf to sound (4-mile flatwater SUP course followed by a 4-mile beach run). Proceeds benefit the NC Coastal Federation. Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Boulevard, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7108 or paddleguru.com/races/WrightsvilleBeachBiathlon2017.

3/18 **Symphony Orchestra Concert**

7:30 p.m. The Wilmington Symphony Orchestra performs "Operatic Orchestra" with Kevin Lawrence on violin, and includes Dvorak's *Violin Concerto* and Strauss's *Dance of the Seven Veils*. Admission: $10–35. Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or www.wilmingtonsymphony.org.

3/18 **US Medal of Honor Lecture**

7:30 p.m. John Moseley of the Fort Fisher State Historic Site discusses the US Medal of Honor winners from the Lower Cape Fear area. Admission: Free. Federal Point History Center, 1121 A North Lake Park Boulevard, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-0502 or www.federal-point-history.org.

3/18 & 19 **Made in NC**

12–6 p.m. (Saturday & Sunday). Handmade marketplace showcasing local craftsmen and artisans featuring art, jewelry, household items, pottery and more. Food trucks and cash bar on site. Admission: $5. Brooklyn Arts Center, 515 North Fourth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-2939 or www.brooklynartsnc.com.

3/19 **Children's Tea**

2–4 p.m. Themed tea party held in conjunction with the NC Azalea Festival. Includes photo opportunities with Azalea Belles and Princesses, a "low tea" menu and elegant attire. Proceeds benefit the Cape Fear Volunteer Center. Coastline Conference & Event Center, 501 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 392-8180 or www.ncazaleafestival/events/azalea-childrens-tea.

3/19 **Symphony Youth Orchestra Concert**

4 p.m. Join the Wilmington Symphony Youth Orchestra for a live concert at UNCW, directed by Steven Errante. Admission: $6. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.wilmingtonsymphony.org/youth-orchestra.html.

3/21 **Rush Hour Concert**

5:30 p.m. Live performance by Onward Soldiers, a local indie rock band known for high-energy live shows. Admission: $5–10. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500.

3/21 **Ann Wilson Live**

7:30 p.m. Rock & Roll Hall of Famer and lead vocalist of the '70s and '80s band Heart, Ann Wilson, performs live. Admission: $42–99. Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage.

3/22 **Stomp**

7:30 p.m. Stomp originated as a street performance in Great Britain and in the last twenty years has become an international percussion sensation. The group uses garbage cans, hubcaps, barrels, kegs, plumbing fixtures, paint cans, shopping carts, and more to create rhythmic beats, movement and visual comedy. Admission: $28–80. Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

3/22 **Lawn & Disorder**

7:30 p.m. National headlining comedians Karen Morgan and Jim Colliton team up in this hilarious show about life as we know it: mowing grass, talking trash and better halves that make us laugh. Admission: $20–36. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

3/23 **Patio Party**

5–8 p.m. Private VIP party in the park at Cape Fear Museum featuring retro cocktails, Thrill of the Grill Cuisine, tunes from the Mid-Century era and an exhibit preview. Admission: $15–30. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4372 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

3/24 **Fourth Friday**

6–9 p.m. Downtown galleries, studios and art spaces open their doors to the public in an after-hours celebration of art and culture. Admission: Free. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.artscouncilofwilmington.org.

3/24 **Listen Up Brunswick County**

7:30 p.m. Listen Up Brunswick County presents the husband and wife acoustic folk pop of The Kennedy's. Admission: $20. BCC Odell Williamson Auditorium, 50 College Road NW, Bolivia. Info: (860) 485-3354 or www.listenupbrunswickcounty.com.

Race for the Cure

3/25

3/24 & 25 **Wrightsville Beach Marathon**

11 a.m.–9 p.m. (Friday); 6:30 a.m. – 9 p.m. (Saturday). Marathon, half marathon, 5K, 1-mile run and relay challenege through the scenic Landfall community to Mayfaire Town Center. Includes expo, pasta dinner and awards ceremony. Admission: $25–95. Causeway Drive, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 297-4973 or www.wrightsvillebeachmarathon.com.

3/24–26 **Kids Yoga Teacher Training**

5–9 p.m. (Friday); 12–7:30 p.m. (Saturday); 9–5 p.m. (Sunday). Learn to create and lead yoga practices for children, ages 2–18, that build on the Kunga Yoga foundational principles. Admission: $325–375. Wilmington Yoga Center, 5329 Oleander Drive, Suite 200, Wilmington. Info: (910) 350-0234 or wilmingtonyogacenter.com.

3/25 **Posture Clinic**

9–11 a.m. Two-hour posture clinic for back pain that breaks down some of the foundational yoga postures that encourage optimal health and safety to your spine. Admission: $35–40. Wilmington Yoga Center, 5329

Oleander Drive, Suite 200, Wilmington. Info: (910) 350-0234 or wilmingtonyogacenter.com.

3/25 Walk & Dog Dash

10 a.m. Pet-friendly fundraiser including pet photos, vendors, raffles, food and a 1.5-mile dash around MacRae Park. Admission: $15–25. Proceeds benefit Canines for Service. Hugh MacRae Park, Shelter #5, 314 Pine Grove Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.caninesforservice.org/walk-dog-dash.

3/25 Public Safety Day

10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Public Safety Day explores the many emergency service agencies, federal agencies and military branches in our area, explaining their role in protecting the citizens of New Hanover County. Free shred truck present, so bring sensitive documents. Admission: Free. Fort Fisher Military Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. Info: www.pleasureislandnc.org.

3/25 Coastal Living Show

10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Home expo presented by the Wilmington Woman's Club features more than 70 vendors ranging from home improvement companies and landscapers to real estate agents and interior designers. Admission: Free. Proceeds benefit local nonprofits to improve the lives of women and children. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 367-3295 or coastallivingshow.com.

3/25 Race for the Cure

2:30 p.m. Features Marathon Madness 5K and Susan G. Komen Foundation's biggest fundraiser of the year. Includes a survivor pavilion and celebration as well as a Zumba warm-up. UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: wwww.wrightsvillebeachmarathon.com/events/5k-2.

3/27 & 28 Youth Nature Program

10–11 a.m. Bring your little explorers out to the park and discover nature through stories, songs, hands-on activities, hikes and crafts. This week's theme is "Signs of Spring." Admission: $3. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

3/27 – 4/14 Yoga Lifestyle Teacher Training

7 a.m. – 6 p.m. Kunga Yoga teacher training teaches skills for "living yoga" on and off the mat while working toward the 200-hour certification. It provides an opportunity to learn about different traditions within one cumulative program. Admission: $2,950. Wilmington Yoga Center, 5329 Oleander Drive, Suite 200, Wilmington. Info: (910) 350-0234 or wilmingtonyogacenter.com.

3/28 Pledge Breakfast

7:30–9 a.m. The Breakfast for Children's Champions is Smart Start's annual fundraiser honoring individuals who make a difference in the lives of young children and their families. Keynote speaker, nCino CEO, Pierre Naude will speak on the role that quality childhood experiences affect the future workforce in the fields of math and science. Hilton Wilmington Riverside, 301 North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 815-3731 or www.newhanoverkids.org.

3/29 Bay Lakes Birding Day Trip

9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden staff for a special birding day trip to regional birding hotspots Jones and Singletary Lake State Parks. Admission: $45. Registration required. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

3/29 Leadership Lecture

7 p.m. Dr. Bennet Omalu, a physician, forensic pathologist and neuropathologist speaks and UNCW's Leadership Lecture Series. Dr. Omalu is the man who discovered chronic traumatic encephalopathy. Admission: $10. UNCW Burney Center, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: uncw.edu/artsprograms/leadershiplecture.

3/30 Wilmington Biz Expo

1:30–7 p.m. The region's largest annual business community gathering featuring more than 100 exhibitors from different industries, free seminars, a keynote lunch and after-hours networking event. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 297-4973 or www.wrightsvillebeachmarathon.com.

3/30 Musical Theatre

7:30 p.m. (Thursday – Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Based on the real-life memoirs of burlesque mega-star, Gypsy Rose Lee, *Gypsy* tells the story of the mother behind the curtain, Mama Rose. Blinded by her own ambition, Rose pushes her two daughters to pave the way to stardom on vaudeville's legendary circuit. Admission: $15–30. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or wthalian.org.

3/31 – 4/1 Dance Festival

7:30 p.m. The Wilmington Dance Festival is produced by the Dance Cooperative and celebrates the work of local cho-

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Shell Island Resort
Station One
Sweet n Savory Cafe
Thalian Hall
The Ivy Cottage
The Shop at Seagate
Two Sisters Bookery
Thrill of the Hunt
Wilmington Chamber of Commerce
Wilmington Visitor's Bureau
Wrightsville Beach Museum

reographers across many genres of dance. The festival also features guest artists and touring companies. Admission: $15–25. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or thedancecooperative.org/wilmingtondancefestival.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday – Friday **Cinematique Films**
7 p.m. Independent, classic and foreign films screened in historic Thalian Hall. Check online for updated listings and special screenings. *Jackie* (2016): 3/1 at 4 p.m.; 3/1–3 at 7 p.m. Admission: $7. Thalian Hall, Ruth & Bucky Stein Theatre, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info/Tickets: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

Tuesday **Wine Tasting**
6–8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus wine and small plate specials all night. Admission: Free. The Fortunate Glass, 29 South Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fortunateglasswinebar.com.

Tuesday **Cape Fear Blues Jam**
8 p.m. A unique gathering of the area's finest blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join the fun. No cover charge. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Wednesday **T'ai Chi at CAM**
12:30–1:30 p.m. Qigong (Practicing the Breath of Life) with Martha Gregory. Open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Wednesday **Wednesday Echo**
7:30–11:30 p.m. Weekly singer/songwriter open mic night that welcomes all genres of music. Each person will have 3–6 songs. Palm Room, 11 East Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 509-3040.

Thursday **Yoga at the CAM**
12–1 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. Sessions are ongoing and are open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Friday & Saturday **Dinner Theatre**
7 p.m. TheatreNOW presents Clyde Edgerton's *Killer Diller* adapted for stage by Paul Ferguson. Runs 3/31 – 4/29. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3now or www.theatrewilmington.com.

To add a calendar event, please contact calendar@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted by the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

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LAWN & DISORDER
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MIKE FARRIS
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Port City People

Art of the Bloom

Presented by the Cameron Art Museum
and the New Hanover Garden Club

Thursday, January 5, 2017

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Pat Shaw, Farrel Freeman

Wilbur Jones, Ann Larue

Tatyana Kulida, Desi Parker

Todd Lengyeltoti, Gale Smith, Nancy Noel May

Kevin Kennedy

Dot Balcum, Patti Jacaruso

Betty Brown, Jane Hight McMurry

Robert & Angie Baker

Paula Faraday, Linda Nowotny

Mary Whitehurst, Helene Pasin, Peggy Vineyard

Brittney Wells

Brian & Marilyn Newman, Roy Van Teyens

Port City People

Annual Azalea Festival Party
Hilton Wilmington Riverside

Friday, January 20, 2017

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Jennie & Alan Dalton

Sandy Collette, Alison Baringer, Stephanie Lawson

Lilly Kays

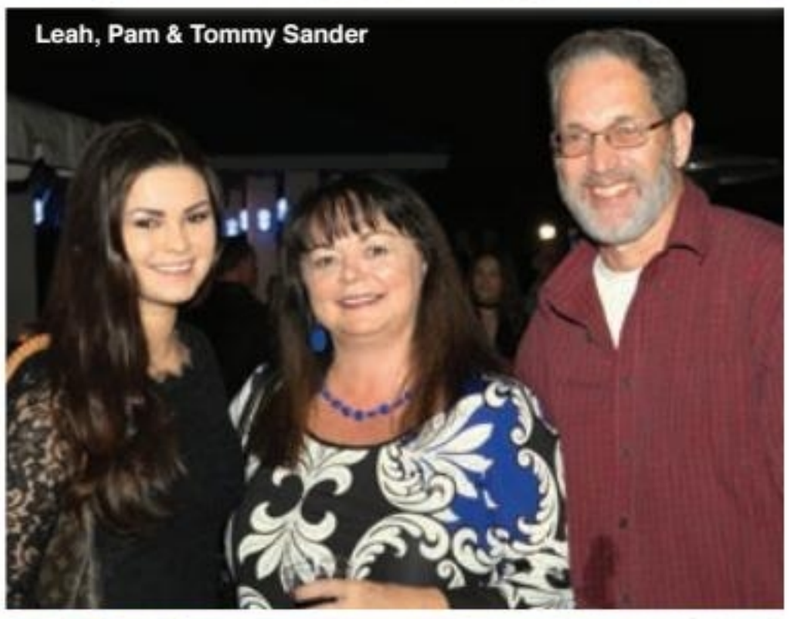
Shannon & Tom Dorgan

Emily & Joe Cipalla, Kristy Nguyen, Huy Le

Cynthia Holden, Shelby Moore

Terry Quinn, Dan Whisnant, Sandee Spradley

Courtney Lewis, Julie Payne, Jennifer Marsh


Leah, Pam & Tommy Sander

Mendy Melton, Angie Czeck, Kelly Stuble, Blair Dean, Misty Clark
Ruth Ann Nye

Michael Shamby, Jr., Sharon Edelstein

Vanessa Cain, Earl Oxendin

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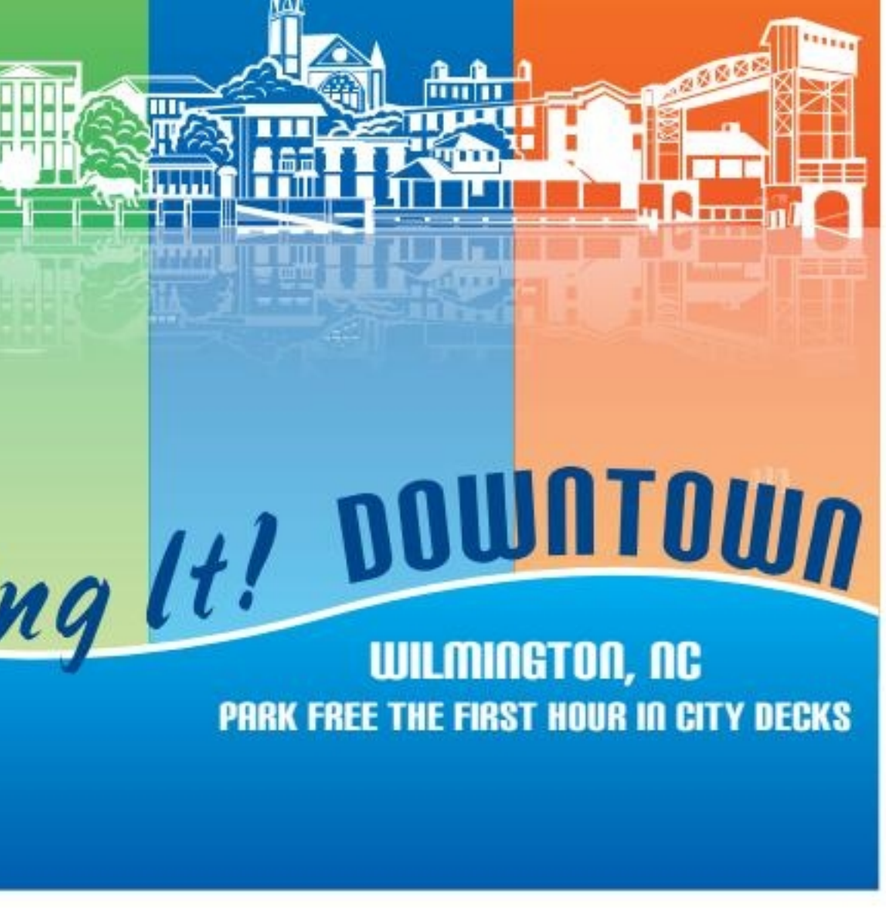

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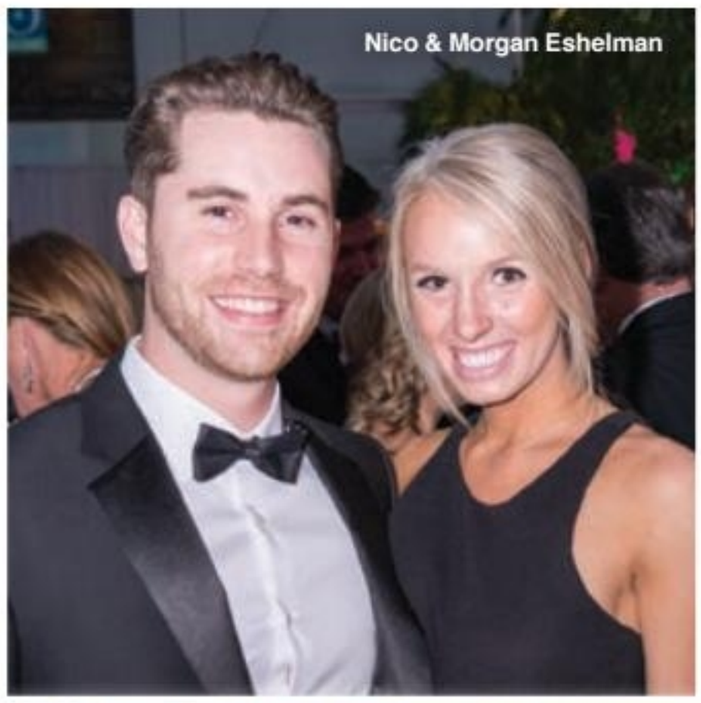
Port City People

17th Annual Founders' Gala

Fundraiser for the Betty H. Cameron Women's and Children's Hospital

Saturday, January 28, 2017

Photographs by Bill Ritenour


Nico & Morgan Eshelman

Rachel Almond, Kevin Marriott

Zachary & Cate Piech, Bill & Monique Benson

Dr. Mark & Janet Rodger, Megan & Dr. Walter Freuth

Chuck & Carol Kays

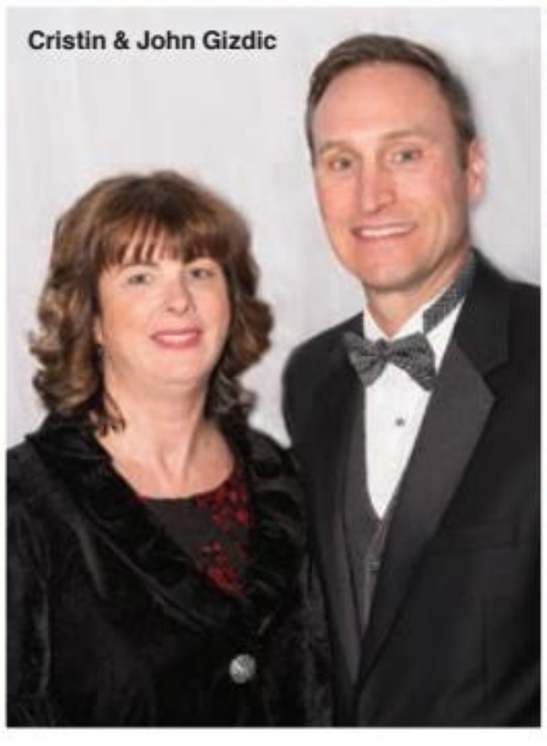
Ashley Batten, Julie Dube, Erin Schofield, Julie Oliver

Rob & Alison Boswell

Fred & April Eshelman

Amber Lewis, Sean & Suzanne Neblett, Marissa Dunsmore

Tim & Amy Meathery, Claire & Spencer Parker


Cristin & John Gizdic

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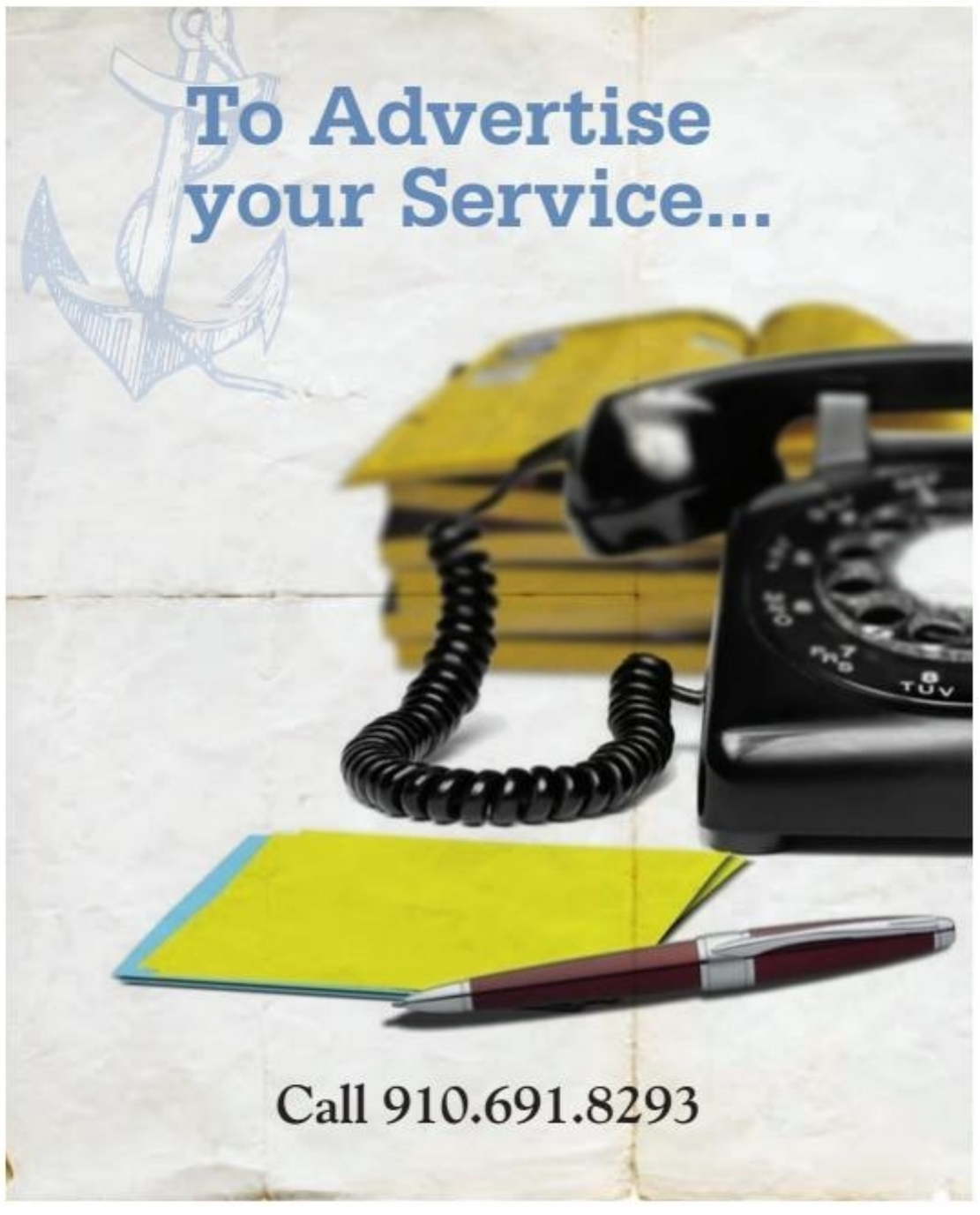
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Surprise! Surprise!

Forget the turnips, Pisces, because life's about to turn around

By Astrid Stellanova

Time for March Madness and Gladness, Star Children!

St. Paddy's Day on the 17th, and then we give Ole Man Winter the boot on the 20th. Get green. Thaw out. Get on down. Shake the winter funk off and get your good time groove on, Wild Things. Ad Astra — Astrid

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
Honey, times ain't so bad. Don't go all Scarlet O'Hara, scrounging in the dirt for turnips and cutting up the living room drapes. For your birthday, you have a consolation prize you are going to *like*. Oh, it's a gen-u-ine humdinger, and faster than you can say twiddle-dee-dee, you get the biggest surprise in the tee-nine-siest package.

Aries (March 21–April 19)
You've outdone yourself recently, getting yourself prime placement in the Pissing-People-Off Hall of Fame. Have you lost your ever-loving marbles? Don't try and blame all your woes on Jesus, carbohydrates and the mean girls on the cheerleading squad! This is a great year to come clean about the fact that you pitched a fast-ball that was just damn lucky and stop pretending it wasn't a fluke. Go work on your game, Child.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
Remember, class is subjective. Even paper towel can be called common white trash. But not only is that white trash useful, it absorbs a whole lot of other people's spills. Don't try and keep up with the Joneses, because, honestly, *they* are not all that and a pack of Nabs anyway. Your past does not define you.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)
Your self-mastery has taken a back seat to your need to know what all your closest friends are doing, where, and whoever they are doing it with. Throw it in reverse my Twin, and resist the urge to track your nearest and dearest like a bloodhound. You may feel insecure, but in the coming months you will get a boost that will make you wonder why that was ever true.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
You have been laid up nursing a bad case of the poor pitifuls. Unsure how to get some perspective and back up on your feet? Here's what you need to know. Honey, life hits us all hard. But you think you fall from some kind of a greater height than the rest of us, right? Not. At. All. The sun is about to break through the clouds, Sunshine.

Leo (July 23–August 22)
Sugar, everybody's dee-lighted you are feeling in fine fettle. But, honestly, spell "over-confident." A pack of dogs can chase a car and a fast one will dang nearly catch it, but not many of them can change gears and drive the thing. You have got a learning curve before you slide behind the wheel. Hit the books.

Virgo (August 23–September 22)
It's been a dry spell for you in the social department. Don't worry, dishes, no one did me either. But actually, you are about to have a good times breakthrough and you will be irresistible to somebody that used to give you the coldest of cold shoulders. Meantime, Poor Thing, you finally get credit long overdue.

Libra (September 23–October 22)
You've been working hard on an image that you privately consider to be artsy. There ain't much distance between eccentric and crazy. And I don't think anybody believes that wearing a beret makes you an *artiste*. In the meantime, be careful about leaning too much on a confidant that happens to have a very big mouth and a weak backbone.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
You share everything lately, dontcha? *Especially* the check. The road to frugality started out as a good thing and then you took a turn toward Crazy Town. Relax, Sugar. You have savings in the bank and more sense than most when it comes to turning a dollar. This month, splurge a little and live a lot.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)
You have the wattage of a very big star, but your lights went on low dim due to some mean-spirited body who always makes you feel a little foolish and a lot outclassed. Snap out of it, Sugar. They are envious of your God-given talents, and they wouldn't bother to throw shade at you if they weren't.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
Put that Sapphire-Chase-Supreme-Big-Spenders-Club plastic in the safe, put it under the floorboard, or just get the scissors out and cut it up. You know you didn't need that new credit card, and nobody cares if it's the same one that the Spending Hall of Famers pack in their wallets. You know it is a royal temptation, so skip the coronation.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
When Twain quipped that cauliflower is cabbage with a college education, Darling, he was thinking of your chief critic. Maybe this uppity someone is an alum of Cabbage College and now they think this makes them better than you. They can think again, Honey. You've got big talent and all they have got is a big head — of cabbage. So skip the Tom Dooley act and don't go hanging down your (much nicer) head.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

Yelp!

Something to sink your teeth into

By Clyde Edgerton

I went to a new dentist last week.

The old one recently retired. I sat in the waiting room reading a magazine until called into the room with the chair and drills. That room had new equipment and I noticed that the seat-chair-bed-thing that you sit on and that they lean you back in, felt very comfortable.

I needed a crown. The new dentist came in. The reason I was using a new dentist is that he took over the patients of my old one.

Isn't it funny what all we don't check up on. You may be different but I ask friends about where to eat. I go online and check prices and comments about shoes I might buy. And in the store, I try on several pairs before buying. I go into Dick's for a basketball and look at a whole rack with prices under each basketball and I pick up several and dribble them there in the store. Then I decide.

But I go to somebody who is going to operate on my head, inside my mouth with drills and needles and cement, and I don't do research. Maybe you do. But somehow I've never shopped for a dentist. My mama took me to the first one and then that dentist retired and turned over his office to a distant cousin of mine — and I went to him because he was kin — and then he turned his office over to another dentist.
I continued going to that one for years . . .

Then I moved to Wilmington and I have no idea how I ended up with my first Wilmington dentist (15 years ago), since I didn't inherit him. (I had no complaints.) And now, when that one retired, the office people didn't change and I kind of knew them, and all of the sudden I was in the long, reclining seat when the new guy came in. I had no idea of whether or not he could tell a bicuspid from a bicycle. He looked to be about 12, 13 years old.

Things went fine. I liked him. He wore gloves with a grape smell. On purpose. Honest.

Another thing I've noticed is that people in our culture tend to be silent about the price of a dentist's or doctor's bill — when you pay, that is. If it's your car and your oil has been changed and you've gotten a new battery, you say to the cashier, "How much?" and the cashier tells you and you pay. If it's a doctor, the cashier says, "That's a $30 or $70, or (now) $90 co-pay, please." And you pay it. The end.

What I don't say is, "How much was the total charge for today's visit?" Maybe you do.

Actually, for a short while about three years ago, I did ask the receptionist/cashier about total bill numbers, and something like the following is what usually happened:

"That's a $40 co-pay," says the receptionist/cashier.

I reach for my billfold and say, "Can you tell me how much the bill is?"

"Forty dollars."

"No, I mean for the entire visit. You know — the whole bill. I'm just curious."

"For the entire visit?" she asks, looking up at me for the first time. She's looking me in the eye.

"Yes, Please. Thank you."

"Well, let's see," she says, and she looks down at the piece of white paper she's about to file, having given me the yellow copy. I look at my copy. It has 200 tiny squares with something medical written in beside each, something like "Quadra florientine xerox procedure." Or "Hymiscus of the vertebrae test." Of the 200, nine are checked off.

She goes to a closet and gets an adding machine, one like my father used to have in his grocery store in the '50s. She brings it back out, places it on her desk, and puts the white piece of paper down beside it. "Hang on," she says. "This might take a minute or two." She turns to the computer while holding her finger on that first check in the top little block on the white piece of paper. With a mouse under the other hand, she finds what she's looking for on the computer from a website and puts a number into the adding machine, and pulls the handle. She sound is sort of: Cha-chank.

"OK," she says. "Let me see here." She places a finger on the second check, finds a different website, and finds what she's looking for. She puts a number into the adding machine. Cha-chank.

She makes a phone call and says, "Yes, I can wait." In about two minutes she says, "Yes, can you give me the price of a crankshem rebotolin frisk? . . . . OK, thanks." Cha-chank.

She's back on the computer. This goes on for a while. Shadows, from sunlight coming through windows, lengthen across the room.

"Okey-doke," she says. She tears off the strip of paper from the adding machine, pulls a curtain around her that hangs from a curved rod, looks over my shoulder, leans forward, looks left and right, circles the bottom number and places it up on the counter in front of me. $489.23.

I say, "Thank you very much."

Now, I'm waiting for the day there is a co-pay on the co-pay. And that time is not far off, probably about the time my dentist turns 16 or 18.

ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY BLAIR

Clyde Edgerton is the author of 10 novels, a memoir and most recently, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *He is the Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW.*

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